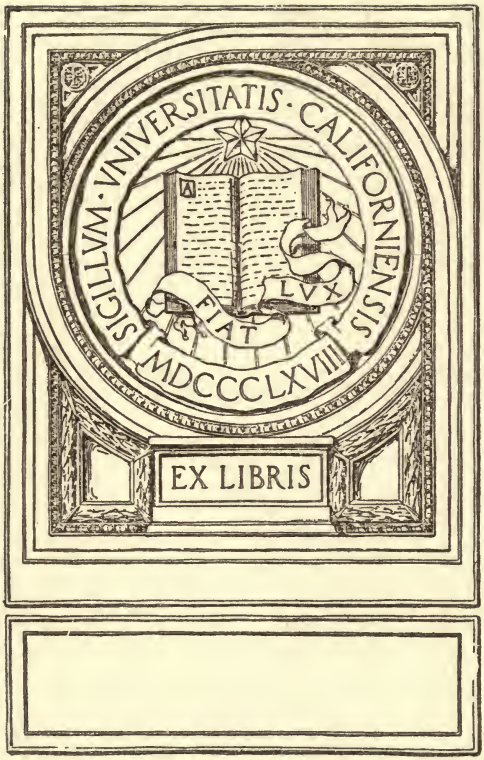
MY FIGHTING LIFE

GEORGES CARPENTIER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MY FIGHTING LIFE

CALIFORNIA

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Georges Carpentier

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My Fighting Life

BY

GEORGES CARPENTIER

(*Champion Heavy-weight Boxer of Europe*)

With Eleven Illustrations

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD

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To

All British Sportsmen

I dedicate this, The Story of My Life.

Were I of their own great country, I feel
I could have no surer. no warmer, no
more lasting place in their friendship

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

MY FIGHTING LIFE

CHAPTER I

I BECOME DESCAMPS' PUPIL

OUTSIDE my home in Paris many thousands of my countrymen shouted and roared and screamed; women tossed nosegays and blew kisses up to my windows.

"*Vive Carpentier!*" came from a mighty chorus of voices. Paris was still in an ecstasy of enthusiasm; my contest against Joe Beckett, so swift, sensational, dramatic, incredible, remained the wonder of the moment, and as I looked from my window on to the street below I shook and shivered.

My father, a man of Northern France—hard, stern, unemotional — clutched the hand of my mother, whose eyes were streaming wet. Albert, also my two other brothers and sister made a strange group. They were transfixed. François Descamps was pale; his ferret-like eyes blinked meaninglessly. Only my dog, Flip, now I come to

think of it all, understood—for he gave himself over to howls of happiness. This day of unbounded joy so burnt itself into my mind that I shall remember it for all time.

"Georges, *mon ami*," exclaimed my father, "no such moment did I ever think would come into our lives."

And I understood.

My life, as I look back upon it, has been a round of wonders. Twenty-six years ago I was born at Lens. My father was employed at one of the local collieries. His lot was a common one, our home little and modest. When scarcely more than a baby, I was earning a franc a day as a bicycle messenger. My school days were over when the nursery should have claimed me. Birth, circumstances, environment, the dull, narrow, parochial circle into which I came, made me a man when I was but a child. They tell me, though, that I was happy, that in a precocious and mystical way I would dream and prattle of adventure, of travel; that I had an insatiable love of reading; that I was given to wondering; that restlessness seized me from the days when I could but toddle, and there were moments when my mother despaired of my future. I conjured up the day when I would go far away

from Lens, and the yearning to go afield was quickened by visits to the neighbourhood of circuses, which have ever been a source of joy to the young folk of the French provinces. It was a peep which I took into one of these travelling circuses that had nearly all to do with shaping my career. For as I beheld a man, whom I decided was the most remarkable of all performers on the trapeze, I sought on many days afterwards to get the consent of my parents to join a troupe of acrobats, for already I had acquired the art of tumbling, and I was counted by my friends to be a contortionist of uncommon ability.

In her simple, homely way my mother would take hold of me and enlarge upon the wickedness of my desires. But good, persuasive soul though she was, she could not wean me of my fondness for the circus, and it chanced one day that a travelling boxing booth was pitched in Lens.

The proprietor of it was a hard-bitten fellow; in his troupe were several much-battered English boxers. I can see them now. In singlets once white, and in them holes that told of days of leanness, they stood on a raised platform like mutes, the while their proprietor invited young men to come inside and box with them. I yielded to the invitation, though I had not only never seen an English

boxer, but I had not even handled a boxing glove. What precisely happened I shall never know, but after I had had my "fight" I was asked to become one of the troupe. The idea fascinated me; I would have gone with the booth there and then had I not promised my mother that I would never go away without telling her.

The prospect of my becoming a boxer horrified her. That she had not the faintest notion of what boxing was did not deter her from painting a lurid picture of my future. I pleaded with her; I coaxed and cajoled, but she was unbending. And I was sad. But the passion to learn to box after the fashion of the English burned furiously within me.

The desire to go into the world as an acrobat vanished, and for long did I think and dream and wonder about the strange fellows of the boxing booth. That they—rough, uncouth men—could and did dare to drop into this and that town and lay low all and sundry by their art, their skill, their science, bordered on the miraculous.

And there came a day when I learned that in Lens there was one "Professor Descamps, teacher of *la boxe Anglais*." Folk of my neighbourhood, so curious and extraordinary was "the Professor," spoke of him as a "mystery man." It was voted that he dabbled in magic. A lone, misunderstood

man was François Descamps. That he was not of the coal-fields, that he was of a world different from his fellows, put him in a position of almost awful isolation. François Descamps was feared because many remarkable tales were woven around him, and because he was feared I was drawn to him as if by some magnet.

So to his house did I go. I found him alone in his gymnasium, which was a small room. Had I dared, I would have laughed outright, for there he was rushing here and there, his fists clenched, his lips pressed tight, his eyes had red in them; he was waging the most terrible of battles against—Nobody.

It was not until after many days that I discovered that he was doing nothing more serious than shadow-boxing.

"And what do you want?" he asked. "Why come you here?"

There was something in the good François that I had not discovered in any other man of Lens. His voice, his intense eagerness, his little, keen, stabbing eyes, drew me to him. I confess, however, that the story I told came haltingly. It was that I desired to become one of his pupils. He laughed in his queer, hearty fashion, and stroked my pale, thin face.

"You would box, eh? But you are too young, too tiny. Come to me when you have grown."

"But I can box already. I have boxed at the booth. I want to fight like the English, and you are the Professor, eh?" I replied.

And with mock ceremony François took and put on my baby hands a pair of monstrously big gloves. We sparred a couple of rounds, and then I was sent home. The sequel to my visit to the Professor was soon to come, for two or three days later Descamps, to my great joy, told me that he had interviewed my parents, and it had been decided that he might take me as his pupil. This I learned one winter's evening in his gymnasium. In the centre of it a log fire blazed merrily, an oil lamp burned in a tired way, and three or four tallow candles flickered.

Taking me on his knee, he explained in language extravagant and fantastical his ambition:

"You, my Georges, are now my pupil. I am your master, your father, your mother, your all. Through you I will give to France a great fighter, the champion of your country; you shall go to Paris, to England. Before you are a man you shall have a fortune. This day a new and greater athletic France has been born. For it is Professor Descamps who says so." And until the night grew old he revelled in stories all romance and dazzling colours.

And I was intoxicated with it all. From that night until the present day there has existed between Descamps and myself a bond of sympathy —a complete and perfect understanding that it were impossible to destroy.

Perhaps you would know this François Descamps. A little, square man, these opulent days—for he is an important and rich manufacturer of aldermanic proportions—I believe, because of his quaintness, he has no counterpart. His head, that tells of uncommon intelligence, is set off by hair, thick and brittle; before the war it was coal black, now it is splashed with grey. His face is moon-shape; it has much red in it. His eyes are two little slits, and they speak of merriment; his voice is inclined to shrillness; his gift of language is marvellous. He will talk at express speed for a day and a night, and suffer no exhaustion. That which he possesses has come to him by hard, unceasing work, and by the great optimism that is within him. He is at once a comedian, a philosopher and an exceedingly prosperous man of business. Generous he is, and yet there is no harder bargain maker.

He was a poor, struggling young man when he took me as his pupil, but there was no iron in his soul. Yet he was the rarest contradiction I have ever known. Principally his mission and purpose in

life was to teach physical culture and boxing. A more eloquent preacher of the gospel of bodily fitness never was, and yet in the early days of our association he was a Socialist of a completely aggressive, pugnacious type. There was a time when folk whispered that he was anarchist, but this mainly because he was so strangely different from his neighbours. The fact that he set himself up as a teacher of boxing, that he talked and lived for fighting, bred much understanding between us.

When I went to him his pupils were distressingly few, and francs came to him fitfully. But when times were hardest and luxuries rare, his optimism, his belief in himself, his belief in me, was greatest.

He would say, "Georges, my son, there is no money, but to-morrow there will be plenty!" And we would struggle together. From the first day I went with him I found that I was made for boxing; it appealed to me as a perfectly natural game, and very soon I was able to stand up and beat boys much bigger and older than myself.

But Descamps would only speak of me cryptically, mysteriously, for a full year.

As in my training at Stanmore for my contest with Beckett, I was prepared for the ring more or less secretly. But, not only was I taught to box, Descamps encouraged and developed my passion for

gymnastics; he made me an expert tumbler and no mean contortionist. He himself at night would engage in conjuring and sleight-of-hand, and when there came a period of especial leanness he let me into a secret.

"On Sunday next," he said, "we will tour the country cafés; I, as Professor Descamps, of Lens, hypnotist, conjurer, boxer; you, as tumbler, contortionist, and my medium. As such you will be put into a trance and do thought-reading. It will be easy, and the francs we want will come to us; we will conjure them out of the pockets of the country-folk into our hats."

And there and then I was initiated into the mysteries of hypnotism, or clairvoyance. What glorious make-believe did we play! Little did I think as the result of our little rehearsals by which we hoped to raise the wind that years later all London would talk and say that I beat Joe Beckett because I possessed the power to hypnotize. But of the "hypnotic punch" I will write later.

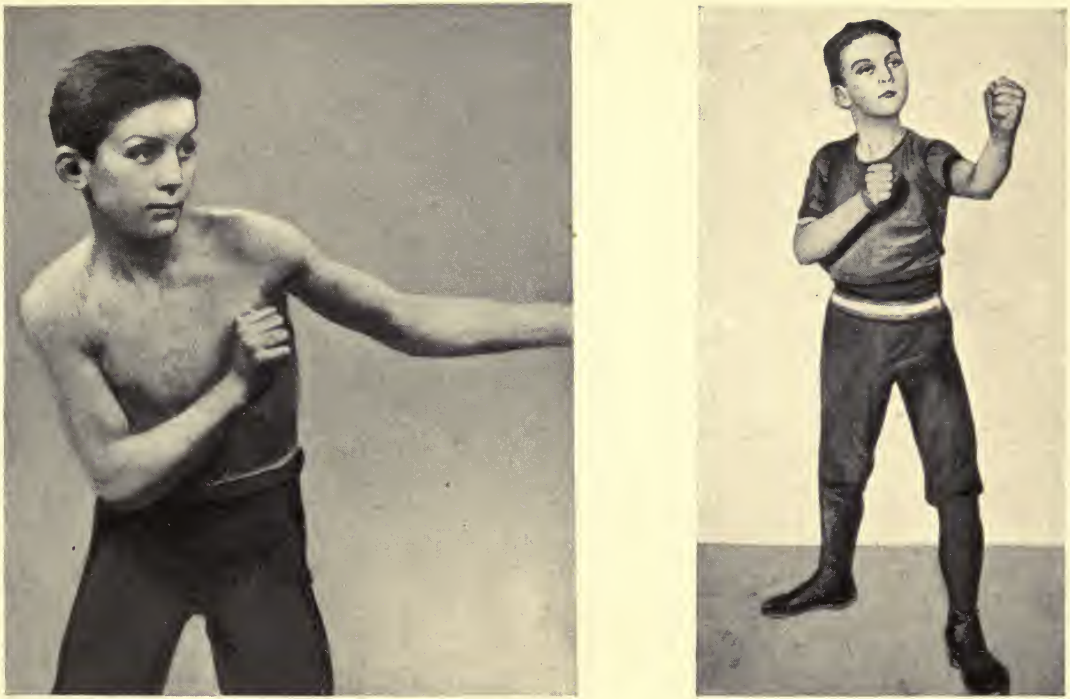
Having prepared a code by which I might tell little inconsequential but intimate things and happenings about men before whom we were about to perform, we set out at the week-end on a ten-mile tramp to amuse and interest the frequenters of the countryside cafés. I must confess, though I could

never deny anything asked of me by Descamps, that I doubted the wisdom and success of our venture. But François feared neither trouble nor failure.

We had come within sight of a café when Descamps cried a halt. An old stringy carpet on which I was to do my tumbling feats was spread on the roadside so as to serve as a table at which we might eat our luncheon. Descamps produced long rolls of butter, bread, sausages and a bottle of cheap red wine, and we partook of what my young and splendid appetite made me believe was an entirely sumptuous repast. Our stock of food having disappeared, Descamps made me stay so that he might "prospect." Away he went, singing and laughing, and when he returned this is what he told me:

"Georges, I have been to and supped at two cafés that were very crowded, and I have had much talk with the celebrities. At café No. 1 there will be a farmer, dressed in homespun cloth of fearsome pattern. I have learned that in recent days he has had much trouble with his cattle. When I put you in a trance this, which I now tell you, you must say, softly, slowly, with your eyes closed, and the while you are stiff and rigid."

And so did Descamps acquaint me with all the local news as it closely concerned men who would be at the cafés to which we were to go. Then, his



CARPENTIER AT THE AGE OF TWELVE (left), THIRTEEN (right)

eyes romping with fiendish delight, he took from his pocket a large sheet of paper, and on it he did write this, his "play-bill":

VISIT TO ——— OF THE

RENOWNED PROFESSOR DESCAMPS

AND HIS FAMOUS PUPIL

GEORGES CARPENTIER

DEMONSTRATIONS!

DEMONSTRATIONS!

DEMONSTRATIONS!

La Boxe Anglaise : PROFESSOR DESCAMPS and his Famous Pupil GEORGES CARPENTIER

Acrobatics Acrobatics Acrobatics

GEORGES CARPENTIER

Le Conjurer Magnifique :

PROFESSOR DESCAMPS

Assisted by his Famous Pupil

GEORGES CARPENTIER

GRAND FINALE :

Hypnotism and Thought-Reading,

PROFESSOR DESCAMPS

Assisted by his Famous Pupil

GEORGES CARPENTIER

"And we do all this?" I asked, as Descamps held his "play-bill" before my eyes and jumped and capered.

"That and much more," I was assured. And away we went to batten upon the country yokels.

With a confidence and effrontery that staggered me, Descamps took the proprietor by the arm, and with a profound bow presented him with the "playbill." Then in his piping voice he rolled out his prologue, while I stood riveted to the ground with my tumbling-carpet tucked away under my arm. What extraordinary, extravagant, impossible, unintelligible language did Descamps employ! He stormed, raved, gesticulated and screamed, so that more than a score of simple folk stood open-mouthed. They had neither the inclination nor the brain to think about and analyse that which they heard. Their mind was reduced to a jumble. All they could do was to gaze stonily at "The Professor" and his pale-faced, sickly-looking pupil. They were not given an opportunity to recover their equilibrium. They remained abnormal, utterly perplexed and bewildered men.

So I set about tumbling and doing all manner of acrobatics. Then "sleight-of-hand"—very crude I fear it was, but it sufficed—by the Professor; *la boxe Anglais* was voted to be marvellous, for we sought to make the exposition the nearest approach to murder; but the *pièce de rĕsistance* was the hypnotic turn.

I Become Descamps' Pupil

Before embarking upon it I learned for the first time that which, of course, was untrue, that Descamps had lived for many years among the fakirs of the East; that, in fact, he had been a fakir. And as became a fakir, he tore and pulled his long black hair by way of helping him, so I thought, to turn on a torrent of the wildest, weirdest, the most ludicrous words ever uttered by man.

Snatching a chair, he bade me be seated. A prodigious wink was the signal for me to be wholly serious. Stalking up to me as if I were some elusive thing, with outstretched arms, he peered into my eyes, drew down the lids, passed his hands before me, and gibbered and jabbered all the time. A snap of his long fingers, a shrill hissing cry about "the 'fluence," and, as per rehearsal, I half swooned, and made my whole body as stiff as to suggest that I had become petrified. I would put it on record that before my bout of swooning, Descamps, on whose hands was much white powder, stroked my face, and by the time I had been put under the magic spell I was deathly pale.

I suffered many violent convulsions during my thought-reading demonstration. What were counted secrets among strangers, such as we were, I revealed, to the utter consternation of our audience. We held these country folk in the hollow

of our hands, and when I had answered Descamps' last question—the answer to which question, you must know, was indicated by the particular way in which it was framed, it was supposed that we were gifted with supernatural powers. Needless to say, Descamps, as soon as he had snapped his fingers and taken from me the 'fluence, held out the hat, and on this Sunday we walked back to Lens richer by some twenty-five francs.

During many week-ends we toured the country-side and prospered. And we did win much fame; our entertainment was keenly awaited by many people.

Meantime I was learning and growing; I ate my boxing lessons greedily. I engaged in several bouts for the mere love of fighting. Round and about my home I won quite a reputation. With a tenderness I shall never forget, Descamps nursed me as he would his own son, but there came a time when I grew petulant and would ask him when it would be that I would have a match for money. Always was it, "Soon," but I chafed because of the indefiniteness of which this reply told, and one night I did not present myself at the gymnasium for my lesson. I stayed out very late with several companions.

Without saying anything to me, Descamps

sought my mother and learned that I had not come home until close on midnight. It was a very sheepish boy that next day presented himself at the Professor's academy.

"Shall we start to box at once?" asked Descamps.

I was entirely agreeable. We were putting on the gloves when Descamps said, "You were out late last night. Why?" And he leered in a strange way as he struck a fighting attitude.

Never before had he hit so hard; he actually fought, and, having worked me against the ropes, he hissed, "Now I am going to teach you not to stay out late any more. You have got to take your gruel." I could tell by the fire in his eyes that he intended to give me a sound thrashing, and the chance of escape seemed terribly remote. Descamps came for me like someone possessed. Instinct told me to side-step, and, feinting with my left, I brought my right full to the jaw, and Descamps was out to the world, as completely as was Joe Beckett in our fight at the Holborn Stadium.

And do you know that as I went to the assistance of the English champion and with the help of Lenaers, the Belgian middle-weight, got him to his corner, my mind went back to the night in the Professor's gymnasium in Lens when my right hand

reduced Descamps to temporary but complete oblivion.

How I would have liked to have told the story to that wonderful audience, out of which the Prince of Wales, as I saw him, stood as a great human man.

But of the knock-out of François Descamps. When I caused him to drop like a log, I rushed to his side and great tears ran down my cheeks. I feared that I had hurt him seriously. I slapped his face, I pulled and pinched his ears. I called "François! Francois, my Francois!" Opening his eyes, he looked round and about him, and then fell to laughing.

"Phew!" he blowed. "It is wonderful, Georges. This is the greatest day of my life. Your left so; then your right so—wallop, *finis*. Your François is no more. Georges, now I know I am right. You will be a champion, for only a champion could have knocked me out so."

I promised that I would never stay out late again, and François, supremely happy, took the cork off a bottle of red wine, and this was the toast he offered in his grandiloquent style: "To Georges Carpentier, Professor Descamps' famous pupil, the future champion of all France!"

A succession of little contests followed, arranged

so that they would impart to me a deeper knowledge of ring-craft. My name, as a boxer, spread beyond Lens, and then one day, when I was fourteen years of age, Descamps told me that the time had arrived when I would fight seriously. My opponent was to be a full-grown man named Salmon, of whose fistic ability Mr. "Snowy" Lawrence, a well-known trainer of racehorses and a fine sportsman, thought highly. With the ready consent of all parties he acted as referee. It was in the latter part of 1908 that I fought Salmon at Maison Laffitte, known the world over as a horse-training centre.

Salmon, as I have said, was a fully-developed man. He was little in height and light of weight; a bantam, as I was then. But he was all wire and whipcord. As I look back, I doubt whether I have ever met an opponent who was so strong, so unyielding, so fierce, so courageous. Every trainer, every jockey, every stable-boy had a place at the ring-side, and, as was natural, they shouted for Salmon, who was of their world. They ridiculed that I, "the baby from Lens" as they called me, could beat their champion. I was so thin, so pale; scraggy, in fact.

The contest was scheduled for twenty rounds, and so far as I was concerned I determined to fight

until I dropped; such, I am sure, was the frame of mind in which Salmon entered into it. It was all very terrible. The speed at which it was started was tremendous. Each of us scorned the idea of a clinch; we insisted that it should be toe to toe, and so long as we were on our feet no quarter should be given. Hard knocks were given and taken with gusto. It was declared that Salmon had never fought better; they told me that I was wonderful, and the pity was that the contest ended in a way which everybody deplored.

In the thirteenth round Salmon, without the least intention of doing so, hit me low, and he was disqualified by Mr. Lawrence. Salmon was much distressed; so, too, was I. I knew that the foul was an accident, and when it was suggested that there should be a return match both Descamps and myself agreed to one immediately. I especially wanted to learn what I really could do against such a splendid fellow, and three weeks later we took the ring a second time.

And what a different Salmon he was then. His disqualification had hurt him, and when I stood up to him I felt that he was a man who would have to be killed before he surrendered. He had trained so that there never was such a perfect little midget. Oh, yes, I hit him hard, but although my heart and

soul were in every blow I could not hurt him; he was like a brick wall. And when he hit me I felt as if he were driving nails into my body.

The several hundred men and boys who looked on shouted themselves hoarse. First this way and then that way the fight would go. One minute I was winning, then Salmon was in front.

Salmon boxed as if he were part of a perfectly adjusted machine; to me, he had the fighting capacity of three men rolled into one. Very pitiable spectacles both of us soon were; each of us was painted "red." My eyes were swelled and blackened; my body pained; there were moments when my head swam. But the biggest punch Salmon landed never hurt me so much as it did Descamps. The little man was in a shocking state of mental torment, and he has told me since that when he saw my legs begin to bend in the tenth round he was for throwing a towel into the ring. This, his intention, he whispered to me at the beginning of the eleventh, and I so pleaded with him to allow me to continue—I even threatened that if he threw up the sponge I would never fight again—that he permitted me to fight on. The end came in the eighteenth round, when Salmon knocked me out.

In the scrap-book which I keep, it is recorded:

"The child Carpentier was wonderful. He was a human flash; he told Frenchmen of such boxing as they had not dreamed of. Such a baby he is, and yet such a man! No one could have taught him to box as he did against Salmon. He is a born boxer, cool, calculating, precocious."

And yet Salmon beat me!

But it would have been miraculous had I defeated this lion-hearted little man. Not only did he possess almost unbelievable strength, but he knew how to box stylishly and well. Had he embraced the ring as a profession, I am sure he would have become one of the best boxers in the world. But he never did his fighting for money only. He loved the race-horse too much to exploit pugilism for a living. I am proud to know that he won high distinction in the saddle. He became one of the most talented steeplechase jockeys in France, and he counts among his triumphs his winning of the Grand Steeplechase of Paris.

CHAPTER II

TO PARIS

If there was little or no money in my two fights with the jockey, Salmon, there was abundant glory, and it was the stepping-stone to Paris—Paris, of which I had always dreamed. My defeat smarted, but I had the knowledge that Mr. "Snowy" Lawrence and his good friends would redeem the promise which they made: that they would bring me before the notice of the promoters of the capital.

And very soon little paragraphs found their way into the columns of the Paris newspapers about the "fighting prodigy of Lens." In Paris an invasion of American fighters had made boxing the fashion; La Savatte, of which Charlemont was such a redoubtable exponent—I, too, have practised the science of La Savatte—was fast losing favour.

Willie Lewis, in my opinion one of the cleverest men who ever put on a glove, had come to my country. Well-groomed, nicely-spoken, a man with ideas and notions far removed from fighting—Willie Lewis, then at his best, captured sporting France, and there followed him from America two remark-

able negroes—Sam McVea and Joe Jeannette, at that time as near as possible world's champions. They were negroes of a strikingly different type. Joe Jeannette would pass for a bronze statue. He was not coal black as was McVea; neither was he so forbidding to look at. McVea was frankly a nigger; Jeannette, dark chocolate. A more attractive, even handsome, negro I have never seen. And in his ways he had none of the obtuseness of many coloured gentlemen. He was quiet; he did not swagger around the cafés, nor did he go strutting along the boulevards.

Well, with Paris for the time being the Mecca of the enterprising American pugilist, and the news which from time to time filtered through to Lens that France was afflicted with boxing madness, Descamps decided to present me to the people of the big city at the earliest possible moment.

I suffered no ill effects from my gruelling fight with Salmon; indeed, I was much benefited by it, for although I returned from Maison Laffitte a rather unprepossessing boy, I was filled with admiration for the unexampled pluck and courage of the man jockey. Until I met him I had only half experienced the glories of gameness. Salmon taught me what a delightful thing it was to fear nobody, and from that day to this I have never quaked at the possibility of a thrashing.

To Paris

I have frequently smiled when I have read about "the good-looking Carpentier," and been told "how remarkable it is that after a hundred battles his face does not tell of fighting." There have been many times when I would have been sorry had I been presented to my mother. My career, from its start, has been made up of hard, often terrible, knocks. Few men of my age have been called upon to suffer greater punishment. Fortunate I may have been, but the road upon which I have trod to fortune has been hard and stony. There have been days and nights when I have despaired of realizing my ambition—to beat each of the reigning champions of Great Britain and so qualify for the world's title. Yet sadness has never seized me.

Perhaps my happy days were before the war; as a boy, though poor and of my own choice of a world with but little kindness in it, the joy I squeezed out of fighting my way to the hearts of the great public was tremendous. And so when it was said that I need have no doubts about my future because I had fallen before Salmon, I readily believed Descamps when, in his majestic way, he said that I should go to Paris and take a front place among the pugilists of the day. That I was but a stripling, ever so lean, never occurred to me for a moment. Constant association with Descamps made me much

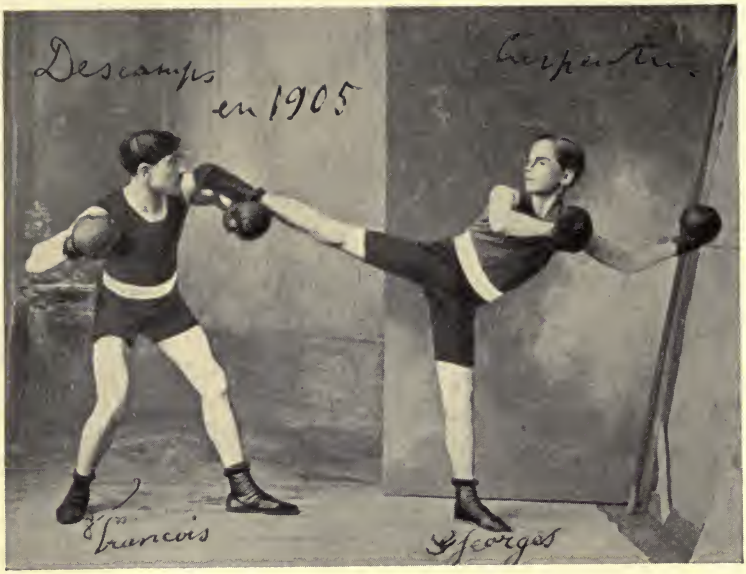
older than my years. Besides, though my body appeared to be so frail, I was as hard as steel, and by instinct, so it seemed, I had, even when a boy, acquired the art of hitting with the force of a full-grown man.

After the Salmon fight, I worked harder than ever in the gymnasium;; when I was not actually at work, Descamps, in the half-light of his man-making factory, would tell me stories of the giants of the ring, and in telling of them he gave his imagination such play as to crowd into his tales a colour and romance which gave me so intimately to know the heroes of the ring, from its earliest days, that I believed they were my every-day companions.

I had come to "The Professor's" Academy one day to take my lessons as usual, and found the little man in a wild state of excitement. "At last!" he cried. "See!" and he held in front of me a letter. "This," he said, "is your passport to fortune." What he meant I did not know, but I had the feeling that something momentous was about to happen.

"We go to Paris, Georges!" he shouted.

When normality had returned to him, I was permitted to know that MM. Theodore Vienne and Victor Breyer (these times, the distinguished editor of the *Echo des Sports*) had offered me a match, the terms to be twenty-five francs if I lost; double that



DESCAMPS AND CARPENTIER IN 1905

CARPENTIER AND LEDOUX

sum if I won. My opponent was to be Young Warner, an Englishman, and the contest was to be one of fifteen rounds. In addition to my prize, two third-class return tickets from Lens to Paris were to be provided.

Which offer we both decided was magnificent!

Descamps, most fastidious about appearances, managed to buy what I was sure was the sweetest, daintiest fighting dress ever made. Our Sunday clothes were brushed and pressed, and on the eventful day he took me by the hand to the railway station for the longest ride I had been privileged to take. Not once during the journey did he talk about the fight; he gave himself over to spinning yarns that made me laugh. With great good humour he enlarged and coloured our weekly tours of the cafés, and made of his mesmeric qualities a rollicking farce. It was a relief to me when he declared that we had had our last Sunday excursion.

To those who may imagine that my life had been a bed of roses, I would tell of what happened upon our arrival in Paris for my first fight. Both strangers, it was only with difficulty that we found M. Vienne and his worthy partner; only after a long and weary tramp. Descamps expected a reception all cordiality as befitted "Professor Descamps and his famous pupil," but truth to tell, there was no

warmth in our welcome. Merely were we told to be ready to get into the ring at 8.30 in the evening. Full five hours had to pass before that hour, and not being rich enough to hire rooms we perforce spent the interval before the fight at a café close by.

With glorious ceremony, I thought, Descamps brought me to the ring, and he chuckled as I, with the grand manner and the confidence of an old-timer, he afterwards told me, bowed to the large audience.

I may have had the grand manner; it is possible that I appeared to be confident, but the fact was I was half scared as I looked round and became conscious that two or three thousand people were staring at me. I imagined that they were mocking at my littleness; I was positive that they were amused at the ways of François, for the little man not only insisted that he should be known as "the Professor," but the proprietor of a boy who was destined to become champion of champions.

He must have appealed to everybody as the king of a new race of seconds. Now, the more important the occasion, the greater unconcern does Descamps affect; and his affectation makes for a pantomime, for he could no more disguise his feelings than he could jump over the moon. He is just so much mercury. His manifestation of joy when he makes the acquaintance of the man who is to fight me, his

studied politeness, his broad humour, the little catchy tunes he will hum as he arranges sponges, drinking water and towels in my corner is so much make-believe. For Descamps on days before and on the night of each and every one of my fights so suffers that his very soul is tortured. So I knew when he brought me into the presence of the first Paris crowd I had ever known, grinning like an overgrown boy, that within him all was tumult.

I won the fight against Warner in seven rounds, the referee giving me the decision on a foul. So between us, Descamps and myself netted fifty francs. I made my debut in Paris on a Friday; on the following night Joe Jeannette and Sam McVea were to fight in the same building in which I had fought Warner, so Descamps decided that we should put up at a neighbouring café and see the battle between the negroes. "We can well afford lodgings and food out of the fifty francs, and the promoter will be happy to welcome 'the Professor' and his famous pupil to the ring-side. There will be no tickets to buy," insisted Descamps. And we went to bed indescribably happy.

The time for the fight, which had gripped all Paris, had almost arrived. Without the building there was a great crowd. Through it Descamps and myself wriggled. With a courtly bow Descamps

explained to the man at the box office that he was "the professor of Lens," and he had with him "his famous pupil, Georges Carpentier. My compliments to Monsieur Vienne, and we would now take our seats."

Something happened; a small explosion it was. No sooner had Descamps asked for permission to "go inside" than both he and myself were seized by some stout gendarme and bundled into the street. Oh! the ignominy of it all! Oh, the towering rage of Descamps, and oh, the tears I shed!

But we consoled ourselves with the knowledge that others could not afford to watch the fight, and we remained in the street content to hear the shouts and the cheers of those at the ring-side. Those of you who know the history of the ring will remember that it was a terrible, fierce fight; a fight to a finish; that Jeannette was knocked down on numerous occasions, only to rise and, eventually, win.

The contest over, Descamps, having carefully counted how many francs remained, decided that it was not possible to take lodgings on a second night. So we spent the night in the open, waiting for the first train to take us back to Lens.

In a year that was yet to come I fought Joe Jeannette for the very promoter who paid me fifty francs for my first fight and denied us two free tickets.

The price he paid me for my contest with Joe Jeannette, which was at Lunar Park in March, 1914, was £4,000!

But it was a hard and stony road we were obliged to travel before that memorable day on which I met the black Adonis from Hoboken. And yet, though money was not plentiful, though mostly did high hopes and enthusiasm keep us going, Descamps and myself were never unhappy. You could not be unhappy with François. And so after my conquest in Paris, he rested me a while, deciding not to venture into the capital again until I had fought round about my home.

CHAPTER III

MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER BEGINS

It was in 1910, after various little skirmishes that are not in official records, that I became regularly employed. One Galliard, who was especially strong and quite a man, threw out a challenge to me. He had done much fighting and had more than a local reputation. Descamps matched me against him, and we met at Lens. This was the first serious appearance before my own people, and the occasion beat up much excitement.

It was a stiff, wearing fight for a lad such as I was to engage in. Everything was against me—age, height, weight and experience. They tell me that I fought like one possessed, but I freely admit that there were moments when I feared that I would have to yield to the strength of Galliard. He hit me harder than I could hit him, but though he punished me much, I did my boxing better than he did, and at the end of ten rounds I was declared to have won.

There was much joy in my home, and even my father and mother who, truth to tell, had never looked kindly upon fighting, agreed that some day I might

win renown in the ring. Without telling me what they thought, they ceased to try to discourage me from "going about the country inviting to be killed," and my heart grew bigger, for I wanted my father and mother to be in sympathy with me.

Descamps derived greater pleasure from my defeat of Galliard than he did out of my victory in Paris against Warner, and in his quaint, strange way he would whisper on nights, "Georges, you must be prepared to fight every day in the week if I ask you to do so, for see——" And then he would flourish some newspaper in which he, in language flamboyant, had caused stories to appear about the "wonders" of "the child boxer of Lens."

And it came about that an offer came to me to meet Wally Pickard, known as the English jockey boxer, in Brussels. Let me tell you something of this Pickard, for of all men who ever took the ring he is the most humorous. If he had not taken to fighting he would surely have made a fortune as a comedian. I do not think it is generally known that for years he was employed in the racing stables at Chantilly, and that when the Belsize Boxing Club of London invited various French boxers to appear at the National Sporting Club, Pickard, as Louis d'Or, passed as one of my countrymen. And, so I have read, it was he who caused Englishmen to say that

there was hope that some day France would have great boxers.

It was never suspected that Pickard was English to the backbone. However, speaking French fluently and masquerading as Louis d'Or, he was accepted as a Frenchman. Since my fight with him at Brussels I have frequently seen him in expositions, and a funnier man I have never gazed upon. He is short, snub-nosed; nowadays his hair is cruelly thin, and you would say that he belonged to an age long gone. But even now he is a contortionist, tumbler and fighter rolled into one, and I have often wondered why he does not, with Joe Bowker as partner, for instance, do his extravagant, side-splitting burlesque on boxing more frequently.

Of course, when I stood up against him in Brussels he was out for a very serious fight, and yet there was broad humour writ all over his old-fashioned face when he saw in me a slip of a boy. He seemed to be saying, "Wally, my boy, fighting is my game and here they have put up a child." However though he pulled out of himself tricks that often bewildered me and set the onlookers laughing by his dodging and ducking and side-stepping, I think he will admit that I gave him a tremendous thrashing. At all events, though I was not so subtle as he was I knocked him out in the eighth round, and, like the

good man he is, the moment he came back to life he was most generous in his praises. Do you know, if Wally Pickard had not seen so much fun in fighting he would not be spending his days doing his "screaming travesties."

My defeat of Pickard won for me the heart of the Brussels people. They did not then know very much of boxing; much of it was foreign to them, but they professed that it was a game after their own hearts, and no sooner had I triumphed over Pickard than various sportsmen of Liége would have me come and appear before them. They felt that in a young man named Lampin they had a boxer who would be more than a match for me. And so very soon I was in the ring against Lampin.

What happened to him was precisely what happened to Pickard. I knocked him out in the eighth round, and the good folk of Liége said, "So soon as you are free to return to us, so soon shall you have another match." Which was agreed upon.

But first, Brussels people had gone to England and brought back with them Buck Shine. He does not fight now, but at that period he was a regular performer for England, and though not in championship class, had had many contests, and was regarded as an uncompromising fighter. He was, in fact, a

seasoned pugilist, and when I come to think, it could have only been the blind belief that Descamps had in me that caused him to allow me to measure my strength against this Englishman.

Buck Shine, in appearance, fitted the popular conception of a pugilist. His build, his face, his general make-up, advertised his calling, and when I got into the ring I thought he was a particularly tough-looking fellow—and he was. He was so hard that I could not hurt him. For six rounds I boxed with such skill that I drew far ahead on points, but then I grew tired. My legs would not move quickly; my arms grew limp, and there was only fire in my soul. His greater poundage, his man's frame were too much for me and I lost. But the satisfaction I had that I kept my feet until the last of ten rounds gave me great comfort of mind. For it was declared, such were the disadvantages I had to contend with, that my defeat was a glorious one. I knew I would go forward. I have not seen or heard of Buck Shine since, but I would like to tell him that though he beat me he helped me immensely.

The Belgian people were so kind to me that I decided to have another fight before them at the earliest possible moment; and very shortly afterwards I received a second call from Liége, there to encounter H. Marchand, who was thought to be one of

the most promising of my countrymen. I knocked out Marchand in seven rounds.

Offers of engagements now came fast; now I was beginning to earn what I thought to be fabulous wealth. As much as 150 and even 200 francs did I receive in a single night, and I was able to begin to build up a fortune. Little did I suspect that in four short years I would be worth a million francs, and that a war would then come and swallow it up!

However, following my victory against Marchand, MM. Vienne and Victor Breyer sent a request that I should come to Paris and box Young Snowball, these days known as Ted Broadribb. Like Descamps, I had determined to have all the fights offered me, but neither of us knew much, if anything, about English boxers. We certainly did not suspect that at that time Young Snowball, as he was called, was close to championship class, and it chanced that I suffered.

We met at Wonderland on April 9, 1910, and I was then sixteen years of age. The contest was to have been one of ten rounds. Snowball, as I saw him on that night, was a little man with much curly hair and a cherubic face. That he was all viciousness I never thought. Well, he brought disenchantment and at the time much sorrow to me. He not

only beat me as completely as any man could do, but he drove it into my mind that "the fighting prodigy," as I was then termed, was a creature of fancy—an idol with feet of clay.

In less than a round Snowball had taken full stock of me, and in his hands I was so much molten metal; it was possible for him to do what he pleased. In the second round he cut me to ribbons. He was a monster; he gave me neither time to think nor wonder; he battered my face, he crashed into my ribs, and I saw many stars. Descamps had already been reduced to tears. At the end of the first round he was all for my giving in; he feared that I would be killed. Deep down in me I knew that I was asking to be slaughtered, but I refused to listen to the entreaties of François. Now, quitting is the one thing a fighter, to be worthy of the name, will not do. Physical pain should never cause him to give up; he must fight on until he drops.

In the third round Snowball used me very much as if I were a punching-bag. He outboxed me, he outfought me; in every possible way he was my superior. Strong, a man with a quick, alert brain and with the heart of a lion, the wonder was that he did not knock me clean out of the ring. How I managed to hold up under the hurricane of blows he showered on me I shall never be able to understand.

I can feel this crimpled-haired man with pink and white cheeks now—always, always, always smashing me to pieces.

Into the fourth round did I enter slowly tottering, but with a determination to do or die. I hoped to regain full use of my legs. I forced myself to believe that the limpness in the arms which had seized them would disappear, but, no—Snowball remained a demon. I could do nothing against him, and when I was hobbling hopelessly Descamps set up one sharp, harsh shout of despair and threw a towel into the ring as an admission of defeat.

I was too sick, too weary to protest, and I permitted him to caress and nurse me. As soon as I could crawl I sought out Snowball and offered to him my congratulations. He had beaten me like a sportsman, and everybody who was present at the ringside took their hats off to him. Few English boxers have come to France to win so many friends as Snowball did. How he failed to become champion, and why he disappeared from the game when he was in his prime I do not know. After his victory over me he went to America, but he told me that he failed to get acclimatized and could do himself no justice at all. Still, his retirement came to me as a great surprise. I would like to tell this little story about Snowball.

When I had my second fight with Bombardier Wells, he came to me and said he would regard it as a high honour if he were allowed to be one of my seconds. "I have surely earned the privilege," he said, "for, you know, I am one of the very few men who have beaten you, and what is more, given you the hiding of your life. Do you remember?"

Yes, I did remember. My fight with Snowball I can never forget.

It is astonishing when you are fit and well and you have ambitions how quickly you can recover from some unexpected, even awful happening. I did not sit down and brood over my defeat by Snowball. If you would know, I profited by it; it helped me to think less of the extravagant stories of my skill that from time to time appeared in the papers. I steeled myself against petting and flattery. I decided that I was merely an everyday fighter, who must accept smoothness and roughness with equal cheerfulness.

But my pride had been cut and slashed by my defeat by Snowball. I was deaf and unmindful of the fact that I was only a boy and had gone down before one of the best fighters at that time in England; it was the knowledge that I had failed in Paris —the Paris I was for ever dreaming about—the Paris

that I yearned to capture, and I pleaded with Descamps to seek a match for me in the capital on the earliest day.

There was at the time, doing much splendid boxing, Paul Til; all Frenchmen were talking about him. So Descamps let it be known that his pupil was ready to fight him. And very soon to Paris did I go to engage with Til, and the contest helped to wipe out the memory of my experience against Snowball, for against this accomplished Frenchman I drew. Which draw, I knew, was the greatest performance I had yet achieved. Thereafter, I went from victory to victory, until I lost to Henry Piet, brave soul, who was killed in the war. But before I met Piet—all Englishmen will remember him for his good style and rare fighting qualities—I won ten contests against strikingly different men. Immediately after Paul Til came one Cuny.

If I were asked, I would say that the turning point in my career came when I met Cuny. We fought on August 14, 1910, at Cabourg, a fashionable seaside resort, under the auspices of the management of the Casino—my terms, two third-class return tickets from Lens and fifty francs. All English boxing enthusiasts do not know Cuny; very few of them have seen him. No champion was he, but in his way a great man, and one who had much

to do with giving France a place among the boxing nations of the world.

If you were to see him now, you would scarcely imagine that he was once a pugilist. He has a queer, old-fashioned face; his eyes are large, saucer-like; he is sparsely built. In dress, in appearance, he is not like a typical Frenchman at all. In recent years he has been ring-master at all the notable contests in France—Directeur du Combat, is his official description—and very properly he is regarded as the first teacher of the "noble art" in my country. Shrewd, careful, a born disciplinarian is Cuny. And I include him amongst my best friends, though in 1910 I thrashed him harder than he had ever been thrashed before or since. Our fight at Cabourg was not held to be the star turn by any means. If my memory serves me aright, the fight of the evening was an affair between that very strong Englishman Arthur Evernden and Henry Piet.

It was not expected that I would give any more than an interesting exposition; the idea that I would beat Cuny was ridiculous. This is what happened:

For eight rounds I was his master, and everybody screamed with delight. Seldom, if ever, have I boxed so well or so skilfully as I did on that day. I know that I never met a more gallant opponent. Cuny has

since told me that I befooled him, and that at the time he felt that no boxer could have been more humiliated than he was. For he would have it : " You were but a baby, scarce heard of. You were incredible, for you nearly murdered me."

The contest was in its infancy when Cuny's face was splashed all over with blood. It seemed that every time I hit him blood started to trickle from some fresh place, and the crowd, at first, open-eyed and open-mouthed at the spectacle, began to shout for the referee, who was M. Victor Breyer, to stop the fight. But the harder I hit Cuny, the more insistent was he on continuing. I imagined I could hear him say : " I stop only when I have been killed." I tried in every way to knock him out. It would have been a merciful thing for me to have done, but I did not possess the strength to do so.

In the third round M. Breyer, who feared a scene, went to Cuny and asked him to retire. The suggestion that he should surrender he treated with contempt; but in the eighth round M. Breyer, unheeding the protests of Cuny, ordered the fight to stop, and I was returned the winner.

Quite a scene followed. Cuny, weak and battered and bleeding, stormed and raved and begged to be allowed to go on fighting.

As I sat in my corner and looked at him I could have cried. He tugged so as to break away from his seconds as they tried to carry him to his dressing-room.

With the Englishman Young Warner I had my second match shortly afterwards. We took the ring at Cambrai, and, as on the first occasion, I knocked him out in the seventh round. I subsequently drew, after ten rounds, with the Frenchman Andony, at Brussels; won against Young Wilson, of England, in Paris on points; a week or two later I knocked out Jim Campbell, also of England, in Paris, in five rounds, and then I was matched against the Belgian lightweight champion, Demlin (who has appeared at the National Sporting Club), at Brussels. I beat Demlin in ten rounds on points, and towards the end of 1910 there came from England to Paris Jack Daniels, a rough-and-ready fighter. I stood up against him for ten rounds, but beat him. Then followed Brochet, a Frenchman, of much promise. We fought at Lens, and I knocked him out in seven rounds. Twice within a few weeks I beat George Randall, each time in Paris, where by this time I had become a vogue.

My dream had by now come true. I had become one of the fighting attractions of Paris. My defeat by Piet was followed by a second victory over Jack

Daniels, and very soon afterwards I was the winner against Jack Meekins and Young Nipper, both of London. Sid Stagg, George Colborne, Frank Loughrey, and Eustace, in turn, fell before me, and in July, 1911, I met and knocked out in four rounds Jack Goldswain.

This Goldswain was the first Englishman I encountered who held a championship. When we fought, he was past his prime, but I myself and others, because of his vast experience, his undeniable cleverness and known capacity to take and give punishment, were more than half afraid that he would prove too much for me. In appearance Goldswain, when put beside me, looked a very old man, and his face told of many gruelling battles. The contrast which we struck was much remarked upon, and I must confess that I felt guilty of considerable impudence in daring to face such a pugilist, who was once the best light-weight in Great Britain, and that at a period when there were many men of his weight of much merit.

At this time, when I allowed myself to be free to engage in any fight that might be offered to me, I believe I was at my very best. I beat Goldswain, and decisively. The veteran, for such did I regard him, was naturally very crestfallen, but he did not go away from Paris without paying high and

encouraging compliments to me. I have never met an Englishman who was not a chivalrous opponent.

Following Goldswain, Arthur Evernden crossed from England to France a week or two later. Evernden, an uncommonly strong fellow, was looked upon as a future champion; it was agreed that there were few at his weight better than he was, and the purpose of my being matched against him was to get a clearer and more definite idea of how I would fare against an actual champion.

My preparation for the contest was tremendously severe. I felt that if I had to strike my flag to Evernden I should have to put on one side the desire I then had of going to England. We fought at Cabourg, where my battle with Cuny had won for me much popularity.

Evernden proved to be all that he had been reported to be—as hard as nails, and as strong as a bull. I understand that once upon a time he had been a blacksmith, and, believe me, there were moments when he made me imagine that he had a hammer stowed away in his glove. We fought fifteen rounds, every one of which was crowded with incident, and there was a period when I doubted whether I should win.

My blows made little impression upon the iron

frame of Evernden, so I devoted myself to making points; it was impossible to knock him out. I was declared to be the winner at the finish. This fight took much out of me; it left me very tired, and I was a very jaded young man when in the following month I took the ring against Dixie Kid, whose real name is Aaron Brown.

He is a negro; something of the monkey about him. For one who is scarcely of medium height, he has a phenomenal reach. His arms are gorilla like, and I frankly admit that I did not relish his appearance at all. There were many puckers in his face, which was very old, and he had a cauliflower ear. I often wonder how old Dixie Kid was when I met him in 1911 in Trouville. He professed to be a young man, but I am sure he was old enough to be my father. One of a small army of black boxers who had found their way to Paris from America, he was one of the most extraordinary men I have ever been called upon to fight. He scarcely seemed human; he was certainly abnormal; not a nice man at all. The moment I saw him I confided to Descamps that I did not like his looks and his strange colour. He was not jet black; he was more nut-brown than positively black.

In the first round I realized that I was engaged in a hopeless tussle, for the little black man was a

freak. It hurt me to surrender to him, but for once I listened to Descamps and gave up.

The subsequent history of Dixie Kid all those acquainted with the ring know. Deported from England, the last time I heard of him was that he was earning a precarious living in Spain.

CHAPTER IV

I BOX IN ENGLAND

I WAS still at Trouville when I received an invitation from Mr. James White, the well-known English financier, to come to London. It gave me much delight, and I accepted it at once. As in my very early days, I longed for and dreamed of the time when I would appear in Paris, so now I craved for an opportunity to go to England.

At the time Jack Johnson had recently arrived from America, after having beaten a shell of the real Jeffries, and Mr. White, then unknown to the boxing public, conceived the idea of matching Bombardier Wells against him. As a matter of fact, articles were signed; Olympia had been secured; and Johnson, now a heavily bejewelled, posturing person, with a craze for fast-running motor-cars, and accompanied by a beautiful white woman, whose diamond necklace formed the object of much comment in the newspapers, had received a very substantial sum of money on account. It is familiar history that Wells and Johnson did not fight. The contest was roundly condemned. Wells, Johnson and Mr. White were

called before the magistrate at Bow Street, on a charge of doing something likely to commit a breach of the peace, and they were bound over.

I do not know the full and intimate story of why Johnson and Wells were not allowed to fight—(Johnson, taking a leaf out of the book of Tommy Burns, made it a condition that he would be paid £6,000, "win, lose, or draw")—but the fact is that it was effectively stopped. But before it was vetoed I had come to London, and on many days did I spar before the public with Wells.

I was but a light-weight then, and a boy; but from the first moment I put the gloves on with the Bombardier, I felt instinctively that it would be directly through him that I would realize my ambition. I was growing fast, and already both Descamps and myself knew that the time was quickly approaching when I would be obliged to go into a heavier division. Wells was then the British Heavy-weight Champion, and I will tell him now that the many bouts of sparring I had with him not only improved my boxing, but convinced me that should I become reasonably big enough, I would find a way to beat him.

A beautiful, delightful boxer is Wells, but it was forced upon me during his training for the match with Johnson that he did not have that confidence

which is necessary before a man can hope to touch greatness. But about the talents, the failings and tragedy of Bombardier Wells I will tell later.

Much distressed and a heavy loser though Mr. White was by reason of the abandonment of the Wells—Johnson fight, he nevertheless, in a way characteristic, decided to have boxing at Olympia, and as my opponent he found Sid Burns, a London Hebrew. Let me say that this Burns was the cleverest English boxer I had met, and I count my fight with him among my greatest. He was fast, clever, resourceful and determined, and had I not excelled myself I could never have won. Oh, how happy I was when the referee said that the fight was mine!

My victory was most generously applauded, and from that day to this I have known only great and unfailing kindness in England. It was on October 2 that I defeated Burns; twenty days later I fought Young Joseph, then the British Light-weight Champion, at King's Hall, London. At the end of ten rounds, so severely had I punished Joseph that his seconds gave up for him.

Having disposed of England's light-weight champion, Descamps decided that I should have a "fighting holiday." "You have been groaning under

hard, unceasing work," he declared. "Now for easy money by plucking what the English call 'lemons.'" So we went from Lens to Lille, and I was put up against a Frenchman named Lacroix. I knocked him out in nine rounds, as I also did Theo. Gray, whom I shortly afterwards met at Boulogne.

CHAPTER V

MY FIGHTS WITH LEDOUX, LEWIS, SULLIVAN AND OTHERS

BEFORE I tell you of my battle with Harry Lewis, the American, who had an unbelievably hard jaw, I would go back to 1909, the year previous to my engagement with Young Warner. In the record of my fights, compiled and published by the newspapers, it is not stated that in 1909 I met and beat Charles Ledoux, in my opinion one of the greatest bantams ever known.

This is the pen-picture which I would draw of Ledoux: Dot of a man, his cheeks are tanned by the sun, he bespeaks health. See him on the boulevards, dressed quietly but immaculately, and you would laugh at the idea that he is one of the hardest, the most vicious fighters in the world. He has no unusual reach—he is just a plain, everyday little fellow. In either hand he carries a knock-out blow. It is often said that he is no boxer—which is not a fact. He can and does box cleverly, but you forget that he is a boxer because he does his boxing differently from any other man.

When I met Ledoux, who is two years older than myself, he was king of all the bantams in France. A pastrycook when not fighting, he had gone here and there beating opponents in such a masterly and sensational fashion that I, like the rest of my countrymen, marvelled. It was only after much cogitation and not a little fear and trepidation that I determined to fight him.

We appeared at the Tivoli Boxing Hall, Paris, in October, 1909. I can see Ledoux in the ring now. There was no smile on his face as he sat in his corner; he was stern and tense; his thin lips were pressed tightly together. The bell went, and at one bound Ledoux was in the centre of the ring. Everybody knew Ledoux; he was everybody's favourite, and people rubbed their hands in high expectation of seeing me, a tall, rush-like lad, beaten quickly. I imagined they were murmuring, "Who is this child from Lens who dares to tread on the tails of the coat of Charles Ledoux? It is an apache against a baby who scarce has been weaned."

In a twinkling Ledoux got to grips with me. A right and left set my body quivering and shaking. Ping, bang, crash! Now a terrible straight punch, again a blow from an impossible angle. And *en passant*, I would remark that a greater in-fighter than Ledoux I have not yet seen. So thoroughly, so

scientifically, so effectively does he do it, that he might have been reared and taught in the premier American school of in-fighters.

It was a dreadful, heart-breaking first round for me. At the end of it black specks danced before my eyes, I ached cruelly in the region of the breast-bone, my ribs smarted and were sore, and, as Descamps splashed me with scented water and rubbed and nursed me and whispered soothing words in my ears, I shook off—I do not know how—the apprehension that had seized me. I determined to let Ledoux fight, and I would box. And I hugged hard to my determination.

There was a common impression that the contest would be over in the second round; in the third at the latest. As in the opening round, so in the second Ledoux flew at me. I side-stepped, Ledoux missed me and beat the air. A thousand voices roared, "Bravo, Carpentier!"

Ledoux had gone nearly through the ropes. The next instant, however, he was chasing after me. He did not trouble about a guard. It was enough for him to swing his arms, to come for me with eyes of raging fire, his hard, bullet-like head bent slightly forward.

I darted here, I skipped there. My body I would bend so that it was like so much indiarubber. Now

I was making Ledoux miss by yards; now, so it was written, I was performing boxing miracles, and wonderful things I did with my left hand. I kept it straight, and in and out it would go, like the tongue of a serpent. And the head of Ledoux would be for ever going back with a snap. The fact that he had not already reduced me to pulp filled those who looked on with amazement.

When ten rounds had gone I held a substantial lead, and I felt certain that I would win. And foolishly I fell to dreaming of what my triumph over Ledoux would mean. I was brought back to realities by Ledoux still tearing after me, working me in a corner and raining such blows upon me that my body came near to breaking into pieces. And I was almost beaten. I awoke from my dream to find Descamps almost distracted, and to hear "Ledoux!" being shouted. A great and happy relief it was when the end of this round came. But there were five more rounds to go. I felt sick, and there were many ugly marks on my body telling of punishment. Descamps so capered that I knew he feared I would lose. But though I was pained and doubted whether I would be able to survive, I had my wits. I could still think and see straight. I was much encouraged by the certain knowledge that I was well ahead on points, but in each of the remain-

ing five rounds I was terribly punished. Now and then I would reel like a drunken man; once my legs crossed and I nearly fell headlong on to my face. I was very bad.

Then the brute that is in me, as it is in all men, spoke: "Charles Ledoux," it said, "if it is killing you would have, so, too, will I kill."

And determined that only death would cause me to yield. Those last five rounds I shall never forget, and I am sure they live in the memory of Ledoux for all time. One second he would send me tottering—the next I caused him to be like a man trying to clutch shadows.

"Ledoux wins!" everybody shouted. And then, as I rocked and rolled and shivered, and yet still held up, I could hear "Carpentier! Carpentier! Carpentier!" Again it was "Ledoux! Ledoux!"

When the last round was begun a great crowd was standing and shouting and howling. The odds were that Ledoux would knock me out, but he failed to pin me to the ropes, though he tried with all his might to do so. And then at last—how long did it seem to be coming!—the bell sounded and I fell into the arms of Descamps. I had won. And for this terrible fight I received only a few francs. Yet how happy was I!

After I had knocked out Theo. Gray at

Boulogne in 1911 I slackened off in training. Staleness had seized hold of me completely, and I developed a mood when I did not want to even look at a boxing-glove again. It was agreed that I had well earned a holiday, and besides, it was not so imperative now to gather in every possible franc. Much money was coming to me. My wants were few, and there was a considerable margin to lay at one side. I had been leading a life of leisure for a whole month when Harry Lewis, who had frequently visited Europe, arrived in France and sought a match.

This Lewis had the reputation of having a jaw that was positively impervious to punishment, and not only so, but his head was as hard as flint. A shrewd, calculating Hebrew he was, and quite a likeable fellow. All his affairs were managed by his wife. She it was who made his matches for him; she it was who arranged terms and collected all purses, for, she declared, "Harry has got just to fight. That's his work."

Lewis was a model husband. He was the soul of obedience, and I do believe that he feared to go contrary to the wishes of his wife; indeed, he seemed to take a delight in his complete subservience to her. About this time Lewis was at his very best, and as a welter few men could have beaten him. Many

times he had appeared in London and beaten the best that could be put up against him. I am afraid I all too unconsciously courted trouble when I agreed to meet him in a twenty-round contest, for, quite apart from the fact that Lewis stood high in his profession and, so far as I can remember, he had never been knocked out, I was out of shape and was none too well. Besides, my holiday had caused me to put on much weight, and I left myself only a couple of weeks in which to get down to the poundage at which it was agreed we were to fight.

It was on the thirteenth day of December that I met Lewis, and my experience was such that I decided that thirteen was a most unlucky number. The contest went to the full twenty rounds, and at the finish it was held that I had won. I will make this confession quite freely and readily : in few fights have I come so near to being beaten as in that with Lewis.

A better and cleverer boxer I think I proved myself to be, but I was not nearly so strong as Lewis, and I was thankful when it was all over. Lewis was bitterly disappointed at the verdict. Personally, I think I just won, but that was about all. Lewis has been out of the game for many years now ; only a few fights did he have after our meeting. His fighting career was brought to an end in a sad and tragic way.

He was so shaken and bruised in a taxi-cab accident in London that he became a wreck of a man.

I was severely lectured by Descamps about the necessity of always taking the ring in perfect condition, and I agreed that it was madness to run any further risks. I blush to say that I sadly under-rated Harry Lewis, and the wonder was that I managed to pull through against him.

At the beginning of 1912 M. Robert Coquelle, in the days of his youth a prominent cyclist in France, approached Descamps on behalf of M. Camille Blanc and other distinguished sportsmen, with a suggestion that, providing a match could be made with Jim Sullivan, who was then the British middle-weight champion, they would stage it at Monte Carlo in the following February. The purse offered was in the neighbourhood of £1,000, which, so far as I am concerned, was a record one.

With Descamps I came to London, saw Sullivan and his manager, and articles were signed. All went swimmingly until less than half an hour before it was time for us to get into the ring. Then in my dressing-room there happened a scene which threatened to bring about the abandonment of the match.

The manager of Sullivan set out to quibble about things which I did not think really mattered, and Descamps, not grasping the meaning of it all, raved

and roared and stamped and jumped and threatened. It was quite expected that there would be a pretty little fight between the two managers, but I knew different. Descamps engaged in nothing more serious than an extravagant pantomime, done, I suspect, to upset the English party. For my own part, I took no notice of the row, and I am sure that Mr. Harry Williams, who was looking after the affairs of Sullivan, could not make me out at all. As I expected from its beginning, the quarrel developed into nothing more terrible than the spluttering of a great many words, and to the accompaniment of music we took the ring.

The stage was pitched in the open, and I question whether any two fighters have appeared before such a fashionable gathering. I do not suppose that more than a small percentage of those who took up seats knew anything about boxing. They accepted it as part of the everyday life on the Riviera. But there was one man there who will surely take a place among the most interesting pugilists of the world. His name is Kid McCoy.

In France and on the Continent generally endless introductions of celebrities are deemed to be inseparable from a boxing match, and I was getting fidgety and not a little bored because of the stream of people who came up for presentation when Kid McCoy, who

had come with Tod Sloan, the famous American jockey, to see the fight, climbed into the ring.

A more striking man I had never seen. Until his name was announced I had not the remotest idea that this man was the world-renowned Kid McCoy, otherwise Norman Selby. Tall—his tanned face so chiselled as to be a classical face; hair curly; figure superb; dress immaculate—this was McCoy as I saw him on that afternoon at Monte Carlo. Doffing his high, glossy hat, and bowing like the born courtier, he announced in a carefully phrased speech that whoever proved to be the winner he was prepared to meet him.

I won, but McCoy, though anxious to fight me, was prevented by illness from doing so. But I had the privilege of seeing him in action shortly after my victory over Sullivan, when he met George Gunther, a negro, I believe, and by a perfect exhibition of scientific boxing he won. I have seen few prettier or more effective boxers than McCoy, though when I saw him his big days were over.

Jim Sullivan is in many respects very much like Bombardier Wells. He has a "temperament." Before the signal was given for a start to be made, it was plain for me to see that he was suffering much apprehension. He tugged and pulled at his gloves, and that he did not hear those who were after shaping

the fight for him, I am sure. Only did he stare blankly at me. I took in the situation at a glance, and when the band struck up the "Marseillaise," I did a little shadow boxing and tried to convey to Sullivan that I was certain to beat him.

I got right into the inside of his mind; it was a mind all disturbed. There was no order in it. When we shook hands I knew he was frightfully nervous; that instead of concentrating on his business, he was wool-gathering. He seemed to see in me that which was not. He was bewildered by my feigned indifference, and I have rarely won a fight so easily. We had scarce faced each other when I broke right through his guard with my left hand, and shook him from head to foot.

Then I was positive that I would win quickly. The feet of Sullivan appeared to be glued to the floor of the ring; his arms were stiff, and it was hard for him to work them, and at the end of the first round he cut a very sorry figure as he sat in his corner. Midway in the second round I feinted with my left hand, and brought the right crashing to the chin, and by it I lifted Sullivan clean off his feet so that he fell backwards, his head thumping the floor.

It was some little time before he could be brought round, and I was anxious for his condition. But Sullivan suffered no ill-effects, and when I saw him

during a recent visit to London he was the picture of health. I number Sullivan among the most unfortunate boxers. There is not the slightest doubt that he had considerable ability, but he did not have the fighting brain. I judged him to be a hyper-sensitive man, and the hyper-sensitive man has no business in the fighting-pit.

It was at Monte Carlo that I became first acquainted with hero-worship in an acute form. The moment Sullivan had been counted out, I was seized and hugged and kissed and carried shoulder-high, and when I at last managed to reach my hotel I found my room filled with flowers. And I fell asleep with violets banked up round my pillow.

In the evening I was entertained to dinner by M. Blanc and other notable sportsmen. Such a banquet I have never been to since. It was all wonderful, and how sad I was that Sullivan did not come to it, as he was invited to do. Had he been present he would have left the banqueting hall richer by many thousands of francs, for it was the intention of the good people who entertained me to "pass round the hat."

I stayed for some little time on the Riviera after my affair with Jim Sullivan, and I did not have another fight until the first week of the following April. That was against George Gunther, a negro,

not unknown to boxing enthusiasts in England. We met in Paris, and the contest went the full distance—20 rounds—at the end of which I was the winner on points.

Hubert Roc, the French heavy-weight, was my next opponent, and at Marseilles I knocked him out in six rounds.

Twelve days later I beat Willie Lewis, the famous American, who did so much to spread a love for boxing in France, in 20 rounds in Paris, and almost a month later I was matched against Frank Klaus, the fight taking place at Dieppe, where on the same day Charles Ledoux beat the late Digger Stanley.

My fight was on the occasion of the big Automobile Grand Prix Race. Klaus was known as the "Pittsburg Bear Cat," and was a middle-weight. I was a little beyond that poundage, but I agreed to get down to it. And I succeeded—but how I suffered in my effort to do so! It was madness, but such was the success I had won that I foolishly supposed that I could not be beaten.

And now upon reflection, the wonder is that I ever put a glove on again. For Klaus was terrible. He looked what he was—a fighter by nature, by choice. There was no softness in his make-up. From his hips to his shoulders he had a truly gigantic frame. His jaw was the squarest and the hardest I

ever punched. The power he had in his shoulders was extraordinary; his chest was tremendously deep and was thickly covered with hair. His legs tapered beautifully, and his reach was unusually long. His face was like granite that had had bits chipped out of it. Altogether a fearsome-looking fellow was Klaus.

"You have been well nicknamed," said I to myself when we stood up to begin. No sooner had I put my hands up than I knew that I was immeasurably better as a boxer. He did not employ his left hand as I did, neither had he such a turn of speed as I possessed; and I very quickly caused him to beat the air. But it did not take me more than a few minutes to know that Klaus was a super-man. Ping! would go my left hand; slash! and rip! would go my right, but my blows were as so much water on a duck's back. Klaus did not even blink.

No man was ever harder than he was; it broke my heart to realize, as I did, that he could not be hurt. His condition was magnificent; his determination stupendous. And all he wanted, all he sought, was to get to close quarters, and then, no matter how I slashed and cut and stabbed, to reach my body.

"I do not pretend to box; I am not clever, but, my boy, if I can only get close to you I will make your ribs cave in," he seemed to say.

And on this day Frank Klaus was a king among in-fighters.

"Hit me where and how you like, break my jaw, if you can, I don't mind," I supposed he was muttering. "I will get you yet."

I was making points in abundance, and yet as round succeeded round I saw that Klaus was none the worse. Often did I hit him where and how I pleased, and why it was that I did not knock him out at half the distance I shall never be able to know or tell. I hit him hard enough to kill him, and then by sheer, unbelievable strength and an indifference to punishment that was positively uncanny, he forced himself to close quarters.

Then he punished me terribly. There was no mercy in his soul. Only my determination to keep on my feet helped me to continue. Bang! he would come at my stomach, and crash! into my ribs.

Klaus appeared to take a roguish delight in proving that I could not hurt him, and that as an in-fighter he was a demon.

Klaus was a demon!

My strength was fast giving out, as a boy's will when he is up against a full-grown giant of a man, but, although my legs threatened to break, I hung on. There was but another round to go, for we had begun the 19th. My condition was shocking. I was

battered and bruised all over, but my head was clear; I could still think straight; my wits were not twisted, and I was sure that if my strength would only hold out I would win on points. I was now bleeding freely from the mouth, and somewhere about the middle of the round Klaus hit me in the pit of the stomach with all the power and viciousness in him. The blow caused blood to gush from my mouth, and at the sight of it Descamps, overwrought and mad with excitement, jumped into the ring and seized my body.

And as I felt his arms around me, squeezing and pressing me to him as would a man possessed, I became frantic.

"What do you do? Go away, François! Let me go! What do you mean? Madman!" I cried.

Pandemonium reigned. The din, the noise, the wild shouts—how awful it all was! I screamed; I tried to break loose. But no! Descamps had the strength of a regiment of men. He wrestled me to my corner. Great tears rolled down his face, which was now all twitching.

"Georges, my Georges! I will not have you killed," he cried.

And because Descamps jumped into the ring I was disqualified. The fight went to Klaus.

In my hot blood I vowed that I would never speak

FRANÇOIS DESCAMPS
(Carpentier's Manager)

to Descamps again. I would not be quieted. Oh, the tragedy of it all! But on the night of this day, when hotness had passed and Descamps was sick unto death because of what had happened, I freely forgave the little, intensely emotional man.

"But why did you stop the fight when I was winning?" I questioned.

"My good Georges," he replied, "when Klaus hit you in the stomach and blood splashed from your mouth, I thought something had snapped in your inside. And I being your father, I who have nursed you and reared you, would not lose my little boy. No! I was frightened for you—forgive me, Georges. It was my love for you that made me do what I did."

I could but embrace my dear François.

CHAPTER VI

I MEET THE ILLINOIS THUNDERBOLT

DESCAMPS would not listen to my fighting again from this day of June at Dieppe until the following October, when Billy Papke, who claimed to be the middle-weight champion of the world, so twitted me about my surrender to Klaus that I insisted upon meeting him. Descamps did not like the match at all; he was strongly averse to my getting down to the middle-weight limit, but I told him that which he did not know. After my fight with Klaus, I saw the two judges, Réné de Knyff and Maurice Bernhardt, son of the adorable Sarah. They assured me that had not Descamps interfered, I should, had I lasted through the twentieth round, been declared the winner on points. They, like the referee, Professor Mones, who was killed in the war, were certain that I held quite a substantial lead when François, scared out of his senses when he saw blood trickle from my mouth, jumped into the ring and so caused me to be disqualified.

"And now, François," I said, "it was not Klaus that beat me; and, besides, even if I have to force

myself to get down to the weight so as to satisfy Papke, that I did in order to meet Klaus, and Papke can never be a greater fighter than Klaus."

This and other arguments caused Descamps to consent to my fighting Papke, known, by the way, as the " Illinois Thunderbolt."

I was then eighteen years and five months old.

Papke, perhaps without meaning, was very pretentious and bumptious, but away from the ring and when there was no talk of fighting, he was entirely happy when he was nursing and dangling and cooing to his little child. He was two men—one who would have you suppose that he was very fierce; the other, when in the company of his wife and child, a model of docility. He had a round, chubby face, and had quite a stock of humour of a kind. When I let it be known that I would fight him, he was " just tickled to death at this French kid," and asked " if he cannot beat Frank Klaus how can he hope to live against me? "

The match was quickly made, and we took the ring at the Cirque de Paris on October 23, 1912. The crowd was a record one, the receipts amounting to 110,000 francs. Everybody was there. When I appeared I was almost frightened by the reception given to me; there was no restraint in it. Ladies stood up, waved their handkerchiefs and blew kisses

to me. Papke chewed gum furiously and smiled cynically, suggesting by his manner that I would pay very dearly for my impudence in daring to meet him.

It was once said that Jack Johnson was a past master of ring slang of a tantalizing kind, but at his best and in his most offensive, impossible mood, he could not have beaten Papke. His scorn of me, the unmitigated contempt he showed was cruel in the extreme. He curled his lips in a way calculated to wither any normal man, and the language he used was strange and peculiar.

I did not know much else than French then, but I had sufficient knowledge to gather that he was not quite sure how much of a frog and how much of a man was in me. I was a "guy," a "boob," a "stiff," everything but Georges Carpentier, and he had with him seconds who counted the use of slang as a rare accomplishment.

Before a blow was struck, Papke, still working his jaw at express speed, guessed: "They'll bury you to-morrow—nice boy, sorry for you, kid—ordered your funeral?"

I was reduced to a state of mind by his taunts that I felt as I had never felt before or since. I felt as if I was on fire. The temper in me brought red into my eyes. So I rushed and hit him with a left upper-cut to the body.

"Oh, my!" he cried, "trying to hurt me, are you? Try again! What a wallop! How's that?" as he banged into me.

A wicked Papke was he on this night; with him, everything was permissible. He was out to slaughter me; by his very ways, the viciousness he put behind every blow, his cynical, sardonic humour, the mock sympathy he showed to me, his absolute and contemptuous disregard for playing the game, filled me with rage, so that in the first round I could do nothing.

When I went to my corner Descamps, in an excited but splendidly fatherly way, enlarged upon the unwisdom of losing tempers, but it was only after a supreme effort that I was able to curb the devil that was in me.

Then I knew that if I did what Papke was after getting me to do—to fight as men will do on the stones and when there is a common recognition of an "all-in" policy, I should suffer and even quickly lose. So I decided to box.

It is on record that I was soon far ahead on points. With my left hand, especially, I did much good work; I rarely missed when I struck with it, but though I jabbed and upper-cut him and in many ways out-generalled him, I could not beat him. He did not play the game. When he held my arms, he

pinched the muscles; he would also get my arm locked and punch me with all his might, and all the time he made full use of his biting, vitriolic tongue.

It was then that I put on one side my early resolve; instead of boxing and making every use of my speed, I threw caution to the winds and set out to fight. I forgot completely how to play for safety. Papke, as we were at close quarters, would say, "Come on, you stiff! Get right up close and see what will happen. They will carry you out of the ring." And foolishly I did what he jeeringly invited me to do. I do not think I ever suffered to have my body so punished. Already weakened by my effort to get down to the agreed weight, I had had a Turkish bath before I went to the scales, and even then had the utmost difficulty in doing the stipulated poundage.

The right of Papke's, with which he would describe a most unusual upper-cut, was awful. This was his principal weapon, and it was one that played havoc. We leaned and held and he punched in holds, but still I knew I was leading by ever so many points. But what began to get on my mind was the fact that the harder I hit the American the more impervious to punishment did he appear to be.

There was not a single round that was not

chockful of excitement. First, I would come near to knocking him up; then he would upper-cut me with his murderous right, and turn me green with sickness. The strength of Papke was wonderful, inexhaustible, and on this night I am sure that he hit harder than any middle-weight who ever took the ring.

He would take a punch on the jaw and laugh in a freakish way, and, leering all the time, would wait for an opportunity to send his right ripping upwards.

In the twelfth round I was in sore distress, all wobbly at the knees, but I never thought of giving up. Papke, a particularly cute man, took in my condition at once, and hissed: "Now, you boob, guess you have got to go through the hoop."

In the sixteenth round, when my head was buzzing and strange, ghostly noises came into my ears, and there was scarce any strength in my legs, I took three short counts, and when I scrambled back to my corner Descamps implored me to retire.

And he had the onlookers with him to a man. I was truly in a bad way. Papke had now got me in the hollow of his hand, and he chuckled accordingly.

There is nothing so heartrending as when,

possessed of all your senses, you know that you have not the physical power to continue; a man, conscious of his strength, and yet deplorably weak, is a distressing spectacle. Such a man was I.

Before I took the ring against Papke I had a long and earnest talk with Descamps, to whom I made the darkest threats if he were to do what he did at Dieppe, when he stopped my fight against Klaus. And when the sixteenth round had come to a close, and he begged me to throw up the sponge, I glared at him in such a way, I fear, that he wished he had never spoken. But I knew that I was a beaten man.

I knew what to do, but I could not do it; I was sick and weary and broken. So came Papke's grand opportunity, and he pummelled me without any mercy.

When I was almost falling, and it was not possible for me to raise a hand to protect myself, I nodded to the anxious, tearful Descamps, who with a shout of delight stopped the fight.

When I was able to do so, I walked across the ring to shake Papke by the hand. There was, I thought, no cordiality in his shake; only pity, I suspected; pity that I had had the brazenness to venture against him—Billy Papke, the "Illinois Thunderbolt," who had wandered from his home

for the purpose of making a caricature of "Georges Carpentier, the best boxer in all France."

For some time Papke remained in Paris, with Frank Klaus always hard upon his heels. For weeks a war of queer words was waged, and then they were matched to fight. I took myself to the contest, and it was the nearest thing to attempted murder I ever knew or shall know. It was a fight in which there was intense hatred and not a spark of chivalry. It was not nice to look upon. Each man fought without a guard; it was enough to hit one another and to take an unholy delight in hurting. It was a fight to a finish, and then Papke was the winner.

What it took out of them I cannot tell, but it is a fact that thereafter both Papke and Klaus did little good. Their affair in Paris must have eaten up all their vitality. It was brutal.

At the time I felt the indignity of my defeat by Papke more than I can say. I wanted to hide my head, for I knew that I had been reckless and absurdly venturesome. I should have known that it was next to impossible for me to come within the middle-weight limit, and I feared that I had done myself much harm. It was only Descamps by his whole-hearted sympathy that helped me to forget and to remember that fighting for one's living means a life of ups and downs.

"There is such a thing," he declared, "as honour in defeat. It is true that Papke sought to kill you; he nearly killed you, but both he and Klaus taught you much that you did not know about in-fighting, and the day will come when you will say that the hiding these men gave you helped you to become champion of the world."

Philosophy and Descamps are synonymous terms. He certainly made me a philosopher; he it is who has taught me not to worry as to what might happen in any fight, and it came about that I emerged from a particularly vicious attack of doldrums and forgot all about the thrashing I received from Papke.

"We will for a time," said Descamps, in his little, modest rooms in Lens, "forget about Papke, Klaus, and everybody else. There has come one Marcel Moreau, our countryman, a clever, brave fellow. You shall fight him, and if you win you will get back in the hearts of everybody."

So I came to meet Moreau in Paris on January 8, 1913. Chastened I was then, and with a better and truer perspective. I saw things as they really were. I pictured myself the sky-rocket of the ring; up I had gone, and then—how terrible! I had come down with a flop. The days when we did the rounds of the countryside estaminets, the doubts we had whether we would have given to us enough

money to buy a lunch, the hard, unceasing grind so that we might live, the wonderings whether I had not built a bridge of fancies—these and other things did I wrestle with, and I decided that if I could only beat Moreau all would be well.

Fighting is like all other professions. You have your lean days, and there come days of immense prosperity; again, disenchantment, and then the pendulum will swing the other way, and you live in days of brightness.

I often wonder when I hear the public roaring its welcome to me whether they realize my days and nights of utter anguish; whether they realize that a pugilist has his moments of almost blank despair!

And this I wondered when I set out to train for my contest with Marcel Moreau. This young man had every reason to suppose that at his weight—he was almost a light heavy—he would reach the top of the tree; he was at this time my greatest rival. How I did train so that I could be completely prepared. I did reach almost perfect physical fitness, and, better, I discovered tranquillity of mind. I hold that no boxer who does not know mental happiness can ever hope to win unusual success. Mind must triumph over matter.

There was a great and distinguished crowd to witness my bout with Moreau. Rumour had it that

my contests with Klaus and Papke had sapped my strength; at least, that they had robbed me of the "sacred flame"—a liking, a love for fighting. It happened that, much to the surprise of the experts, I fought as if I had never known defeat, that the superior weight of Moreau mattered little, and in the eighth round, so punished had my opponent been, that the fight was stopped.

We are great friends, Moreau and myself, and he has since told me that I won because I was unnatural; that I fought like an old man of the ring, and not as a boy, and that every punch I landed told an eloquent story of the art of scientific hitting. I am happy to confess that my defeat of Moreau gave me the greatest possible pleasure; it gave me a new lease of life, and when it was over I was so happy that I asked Descamps to get as many matches as possible.

So he busied himself in London, and there came to Paris to meet me Bandsman Rice. I knocked him out in the second round; and then came a call from the Riviera, George Gunther, the negro whom I had outpointed at the end of twenty rounds in Paris in April, 1912, having pleaded for a second match, was put up against me at Nice. I beat him in fifteen rounds.

CHAPTER VII

MY FIGHTS WITH WELLS—AND A SEQUEL

About this time I was in such splendid shape and was feeling so well and growing so quickly that Descamps, with much preamble, I would have it known, came to me and said: "Georges, there is the big bombardier, Billy Wells. Once at Leigh-on-Sea, when you were training, and after a spar with him in which he used you rather roughly, you said, 'Wait until I am a little bigger, and then I will fight him.' Well, there is to be an exhibition at Ghent, and people have come to me and asked me whether you will meet him. Remember that he is more than six feet tall, that he has a reach from here to there, that he is nearly three stones heavier, that he is the champion heavy-weight of Great Britain. What say you?"

I recollected that as a very small boy at Earl's Court I had sparred with him when he was training for a fight with Jack Johnson, and I was preparing to meet Sid Burns; that, rightly or wrongly, I had got the notion that it was easy to find his body; that he was a highly sensitive man; that if I could only

beat him, the best big man in England, my way to fame and fortune would be all the easier. So I said to Descamps:

"Make the match at once; and I shall win it. But if I am beaten—what would I lose? Nothing. I will have the gamble of my life. It will be worth it."

So the match was made. I was then not more than eleven stone and a half, and I should say that Wells was approaching, if he did not actually exceed, thirteen stone. I have a cutting from one of the London newspapers which riddled holes in the idea of my taking on Wells, and between the lines there was the suggestion, plain for everybody to see, that I was about to become a party to a "fake."

I would tell the writer this: far from the fight being a "fake," I entered into it because of the experience I had gained in daily sparring with Wells. To me, to Descamps, the big, delightful Bombardier had severe limitations; I knew, at least I felt, that if I could but get to grips with him I would knock him out.

Further, both Papke and Klaus had taught me much about in-fighting, a phase of the game at which you who know your boxing will admit Wells does not excel.

However, the match took place in the grounds

of the Brussels Exhibition on Sunday, June 1, 1913. It was staged in what was a half-completed floral hall. The day was terribly wet. Still, a great crowd came to it, among whom were hundreds of miners from Lens; and when, as I appeared in the ring, they roared their encouragement to me, I said to Descamps, "Now or never." Men of Lens, you helped me to happiness and success on that Sunday!

No sooner had we begun, however, than Wells shot out his left hand that seemed miles long. I strove to get inside of it, but the Bombardier, standing bolt upright, a perfect boxer, held me at bay. He was a giant; by comparison I was a dwarf; it was David and Goliath all over again. And crash came the right of the Bombardier, and down I went, my knees almost breaking to pieces. I sickened. I could feel my colour changing; my head was awhirl; specks of black danced impishly before my eyes. Yet I could see, I could hear, and while I knelt and shook my head and did battle with the muzziness that had come into my brain, I heard the people as one man shout and hiss. They shouted and hissed at Descamps.

"Assassin!" they yelled. "Stop it!" And for a second or so I felt sure that they were right. But at the count of nine I rose. "I will be killed before I give in," I determined; but my legs had

lost their straightness; they bent horribly, so that it was as much as I could do to keep myself from reeling all over the ring.

I was in no sort of condition to fight; I was helpless, hopeless, and why Wells did not walk up to me and end the contest there and then I shall never be able to understand. It was ridiculously easy for him to have done so. There he was, to me in my pitiful condition, as big as a mountain, and yet he did not move towards me. His blue eyes bulged; he stood as a man transfixed. That I, having been hit so hard, could scramble up appeared to produce in him mental and physical paralysis. Here he had me beaten to the world. I was faint; I could not wonder; the strength to even build a poor defence I had not; only in a half-blind way could I toddle up to him and lean on to his huge frame. Had he side-stepped me and hit me ever such a puny blow I should have been defeated. But he did not do even an elementary thing; he obligingly held me up, and I survived the first round.

"How do you feel?" inquired Descamps, whose face was all trouble.

"He is too big and heavy for me. But I will see how I go the next round. I will just hang on."

Round number two I spent nursing my sickened

body. I kept close; I confess that I leaned on. I did not attempt one blow likely to take away what little strength remained. My eyes still blurred; my head ached; I was only half able to know what to do. I know that every man who looked on had come to the conclusion that it was all over; not one spectator in the big, half-finished building (not even myself) thought otherwise when I entered upon the second round. I learned afterwards that a well-known member of the National Sporting Club, when I was knocked down, had offered £1,000 to £3 on Wells, and there was no taker.

It was then a million to one on the Bombardier.

And in the second round I suffered awful mental agony. I went into it, knowing full well that I was nearly all but beaten; only a miracle, I was sure, could save me. Here was Wells, ever so many inches taller than myself and at least a couple of stone heavier, and whilst I was sore distressed he had not been touched! If ever a man had me in his pocket that man was Wells.

However, I assumed a face of brass. I had seen, while I was being tended and nursed and soothed in my corner, that although Wells had practically finished me, there was much nervousness in him. There was a strange look in his eyes; he did not appear to hear or understand a word whispered to

him by his chief second and manager, Jim Maloney. And as I took stock of him it came upon me like a flash that even Wells was wondering what the end would be.

Had not this been forced on my mind I do believe that I should have given up the ghost at the end of the first round. When I had got through the second and I had almost completely thrown off the effects of the mighty punch I had received at the very beginning of the contest, I had hopes that I would pull through. Let me say that I shall never be able to understand why Wells, with all his physical advantages, did not insist on boxing instead of allowing me to get inside. With his tremendous left he could have held me off entirely, and when I saw that he did not stretch himself to his full and immense height, I rejoiced exceedingly. If he had only done the obvious thing he would have polished me off, and it may be that to-day he would have been champion of champions.

Doubling himself up, and thereby standing little higher than myself, and by refusing to make use of his speed—there is no faster heavy-weight in all the countries than Wells; there is certainly no prettier or more stylish boxer—I was able to get to grips and pound away at his stomach. After

every blow I delivered I felt him cringe. Then I was positive that I had a chance.

"And how now, my good Georges?" asked Descamps at the end of the second round.

"*Très bien*, François," I answered gaily, and the little man's eyes sparkled. He grinned and chatted and hummed a tune in turn.

Half way through the third round I was absolutely sure that, barring an accident, I would win, for this is what happened:

As I left my corner I jumped at Wells. In a second I was hammering at his body and I hurt him. I could feel his frame rock; he half grunted. He was buckling up. Descamps saw what was happening, and when the gong told that the round was over and I sat in my corner to have my limbs massaged, he cried: "Go in for all you are worth next time. If you do—finis! You have won."

I was now a new, an inspired man. I was strong; I was filled with joy.

As in the third, so in the fourth round. I leapt at the Bombardier, whose white skin had many crimson patches splashed all over it. To attempt to hit him anywhere but on his body would have been fatal to my chances. To reach his chin seemed impossible. So, making my body swing, and giving to each blow all its weight, I drove left and right

to the neighbourhood of the waist line. Wells shivered, and he did not attempt to return my punches. He appeared to have been seized with an amazing stiffness. I felt his legs tremble; every time I hit him I reduced his height. He was a man seized with a cruel cramp.

And then at a signal from Descamps—the best and surest reader of a fight I have ever known—I upper-cut Wells just below the breast-bone; his guard dropped, and with a swinging right that started from my hip I caught him full on the chin and over he went.

He was counted out.

Before I had time to realize what had occurred, I was shot up high on the shoulder of Descamps, and the ring was filled with people. Everybody howled. Such a scene of enthusiasm I had not witnessed before. The great audience set up singing the "Marseillaise." But my heart was heavy, and a choking lump came into my throat as I looked round and saw the golden, curly-haired Wells being nursed back to consciousness by Maloney and his young brother, Sidney.

I was glad to get away from it all. And as quickly as possible I made for the big café close by, and in the quiet of a little room I sipped tea and ate a roll of buttered bread. Outside I heard

a great crowd shouting and singing, so that I was obliged to keep indoors. The manager of the café came to me with many bouquets from ladies who had witnessed my sensational triumph, and hung from them and hidden in them were messages all sweetness and tenderness.

This victory of mine represented my greatest accomplishment, but at least one English writer would have it that he doubted the *bona fides* of the fight, so that after I had knocked out the French heavy-weight, Laurie, in three rounds at Bordeaux, and later won a gruelling fight against Jeff Smith, an American, in Paris at the end of twenty rounds, I was glad to accept an invitation to come to London and discuss with Mr. Bettinson, the manager of the National Sporting Club, arrangements for a second fight with the Bombardier.

Wells was delighted to have an opportunity of proving that his defeat at Ghent was all wrong. For my part, I desired to establish the genuineness of the contest at the Brussels Exhibition. After luncheon at the Savoy Hotel articles were signed, and I took the ring at the famous club in Covent Garden on Monday, Dec. 8, 1913.

Immediately the match was made I went into training at Manitot, some seventy miles from Paris, and when I came to London on the Saturday pre-

ceding the fight I was in the best possible shape. In my preparation at Manitot both Descamps and myself were certain that Wells, being such a highly-strung man, was not likely to have forgotten his downfall at Ghent. For weeks before the contest English critics were making much of the weakness of the middle piece of Wells. They told him that he was long waisted, and news came to us at Manitot that Wells had been to special pains to harden his abdominal muscles, for it was "certain that Carpentier will play for the body."

"It is well they think so, Georges. But they think wrong," declared Descamps. "It is good though that the English writers should be so generous in their advice to the big Bombardier. You will see that he will range a guard for the special protection of his body. That being so, you hit him on the jaw, and it will be all over. It will be easy."

When I got into the ring the theatre was crowded in every part. Many guineas were paid for the privilege of standing. It was said that never had the club been so crowded before. Lord Lonsdale and many other distinguished people were present. Mr. B. J. Angle was the referee, and M. Maitrot and Mr. John Douglas were the judges. Lord Lonsdale came to my corner to welcome me, and as he shook me by the hand a great shout of cordiality

was sent up. I am certain that nowhere in the world is fighting done in such a splendid and decorous way as it is at the National Sporting Club. This night of December 8 was to me a marvellous experience. Had I been an Englishman I could not have had a more enthusiastic welcome.

I was three and a half inches shorter than Wells, and a stone and three pounds less in weight. The bell went, "seconds out" was called, and I rushed to the centre of the ring to exchange handshakes. Wells came slowly and heavily towards me.

The packed house, which a moment before talked and prattled, was now hushed into silence by the signal for hostilities to begin.

When Wells ranged himself to fight he had his elbows in a tangle; as I expected, he was wholly concerned about his body, but I saw clearly a road to it, for the Bombardier, in his anxiety to cover up his "vulnerable" spot, had an unnatural defence, and I flew at him. In the first second, with right and left, I hit him in the stomach. Wells had not the faintest notion of what to do; it was as if he had become petrified. However, he managed somehow to find my right eye, and he made it pink coloured, but I brought my right over and cut him on the bridge of the nose.

Wells was already in a bad way. There was no

light of intelligence in his eyes; they were glazed. Many of my countrymen, overwrought, shrieked "Carpentier! Carpentier!" And they could not be quietened. And then, when but one minute thirteen seconds had gone, I landed with left and right to the side of his face. Wells trembled; now he had no guard at all. I hit him with left, right and left again to the body and he went down.

A great "Oh!" was shouted as Wells rolled over on to his back.

One, two, three, and on till ten did Mr. Zerega, the timekeeper, count; but Wells made no attempt to rise. And the fight was over.

I pinched myself so as to make sure that I had won in an incredibly short period. For the first time in my life I was really excited, excited even to the point of breaking down. For a moment I forgot the poor Bombardier, but when my eyes saw him in his corner, his face wet with tears, I tore myself away from Descamps and my seconds, and I rushed to him and shook him by the hand. My face burned; I could not speak. All I could do was to smile —inanely I am sure.

And around the ring Englishmen stood mute. A contest for what was a record purse over in less than half a round! A great big Englishman beaten by a boy!

Wells was drenched with water; his ears were pulled and twisted so that he came to. And then, smiling pathetically, sickly, he stood up.

Jim Driscoll, rightly called "Incomparable Jim," had by now taken up a position at the foot of the ring, and began to talk to Wells in an excited, jerky, even a mad, way. What he said must have been awful for Wells to hear. The Bombardier smiled and said, "Don't, Jim," and then Lord Lonsdale came and coaxed Driscoll away.

The old champion, in a piping voice, would not have it that Wells had fought in a manner worthy of a Britisher, but Driscoll did not know what he said. Then there was a cruel show of hostility towards Wells. By this time he had got out of the ring, and was making for his dressing-room. He returned, and, as great big tears rolled down his sad face, he bent under the ropes. With right hand uplifted, he appealed to be heard, and when he had brought something like quiet, he said in a voice all cracked that he knew he had a weak spot; that he had done his best to protect it, and did not deserve the show of anger against him.

"For," he concluded, "it was my one ambition to beat this French boy." Poor Wells! He was beaten before he got into the ring. It is recorded that while taking his bandages off the Bombardier

said, "I really cannot understand it. I cannot take bodily punishment—that is evident. I was not certain which course Carpentier would pursue, but I thought that he would at once commence to mix matters. How he got inside my guard the first time I do not know. Afterwards I was totally at a loss to defend myself. All I know is that his punches hurt and that I could not stall them off."

Since that night I always regarded Wells as one of the most pathetic figures in the ring. Charming, graceful, softly spoken, a man with generous instincts, a magnificent boxer—all this Wells is, but he cannot fight. Physically he is built for the fighting game; temperamentally he is wholly unsuited for it. He is perhaps the most uncertain champion ever known; few, if any, boxers have made such woeful failures, and yet in point of popularity he is second to none.

There was a sequel to my dramatic victory over Wells—what I consider to be one of the most romantic fights of my career. When the Bombardier lay on the floor of the ring there was among the astonished spectators a rare figure of a man, George Mitchell, a member of an old and wealthy Yorkshire family, who round about his home had won much distinction as an amateur boxer.

To Mitchell the swift defeat of Wells was a

tragedy, a vicious blow at the boxing prestige of England. Together with his friends he declared that it was too awful that "this pale-faced Frenchman should topple over the British champion by one blow." They took themselves to their own particular club, and it was decided to wager £100 that Mitchell would stand up longer against me than Wells did.

A week or so later there came to Paris a little band of Yorkshire sportsmen to hunt me up. First they sought M. Victor Breyer, and to him they made known the purpose of their mission. Their sincerity, their complete honesty appealed to the editor of the *Echo des Sports*, and at once he got in touch with Descamps, who later put the proposition before me.

The idea was this. They had bet £100 that Mitchell would do better than Wells, and if I would put the gloves on with him and try all I knew to knock him out they would pay me £200. The money did not concern me in the least degree; the proposal was one which I embraced at once. And they were delighted, and I could not help smiling at Mitchell, who pleaded, "I want you to hit me as hard as you possibly can. Please do not spare me in the least. I want you to imagine that you are up against Wells again. I should hate to win any

money if you treated me kindly, because it would not be fair. I want to see whether I can go one better than Wells. No larks, please."

I agreed, and a few days later a ring was pitched in a room in the Latin Quartier. It belonged to the Franco-Swiss Professor Lerda, a teacher of physical culture, who was the referee. It was decided that only one hundred specially invited guests should look on, and they were sportsmen of the best possible class.

I looked round for Mitchell, and when he appeared, laughing like a great big boy out for a holiday, he seemed to be ever so much taller than in his ordinary clothes. Descamps looked upon him for the first time, and when he had taken full stock and had carefully noted his considerable height and perfect condition, he gave a low whistle —a whistle of apprehension.

And I wondered whether I had been rash. Descamps most emphatically believed that I would bump against trouble, and as I sat in my corner he whispered, "Georges, you must really oblige this splendid Englishman to the full. If you hit him first, it will be all right; if he hits you first, then, my son, it will be terrible."

Lerda ordered us to begin. As Mitchell stretched himself to his full height a great shout went up, and

from all round the room came, "Now, George, show them what Yorkshire can do."

I went for Mitchell at once—I was taking no chances—and with my left hand I landed in the pit of his stomach; with my right I hammered his head, and I expected he would fall with a bang. Merely did Mitchell wobble and half reel. He shifted and skipped round the ring, and I was after him full tilt. I was annoyed that I had not knocked him out with the first punch, for that was my intention. And yet I was filled with admiration for this clean giant of a man.

When Mitchell's friends realized that he had not gone down they shouted their joy. Mitchell smiled good-naturedly as I chased after him, and so endeavoured to carry out my compact. He covered up in such a way that he might have been clad in a suit of armour. I tried for his chin, but I could not reach it, and the seconds were passing, to the unbounded glee of the Yorkshiremen, each of whom was looking on with watch in hand. This race against time—I had to knock Mitchell out in less than seventy-three seconds else he and his friends would win their wager—was glorious.

I plunged into the spirit of the thing as if a fortune were at stake. So I went for his body. Mitchell half dropped his guard, and I punched him

to the floor. He got up after a short count, and I knocked him down for the second time. But he again rose, and although he was by this time decidedly the worse for wear, he was on his feet, and a fraction more than two minutes had passed. And, holding up a little longer, had gone "one better than Wells."

His friends screamed and roared their delight. But Mitchell, I am sure, did not realize that he had pulled off the wager, for he squared up to me, his lips pressed tight, and determination writ all over his manly face. He was still full of fight. Working him into a corner so that he could not escape me, I feinted with the left, and brought the right over and knocked him out.

Mitchell rolled over, and was seized and carried away by his friends, whose manner suggested that Mitchell had won the greatest conquest of his life.

It was a great relief to me when he came round. I was afraid that I had hurt him. Mitchell shook himself, felt his jaw as if he were not sure whether it had been hopelessly splintered, and, laughing uproariously, declared with mock bravado: "I have wiped out the stain on English boxing. Now we will all go to dinner and make merry, for all is well in the world."

This little affair with Mitchell helped me more

than anything else to understand the young men of England. Mitchell made me think. He taught me to understand what is meant when it is said: "That man is one of the best; he is a sport."

We became great friends, did Mitchell and I, and less than a year afterwards he, like myself, went to the war. I am alive, but George Mitchell lies "out there." I am not an unusually emotional man, I have never been suspected of being hysterical; but when they came to me in 1916 and told me that he had been killed, I took myself into a corner, bit my lips so that blood came from them, and cried.

George Mitchell would not have had any other death. If it is ever possible, I will go to the grave of George Mitchell and say to him, "George, I know how you fought. You kept your guard high, and you met death without flinching."

The last time I saw him was in a café in Montmartre, and I remember him saying, as he toasted me in a glass of wine:

"Carpentier, I thought Wells went down too easily. But I did not know you as I know you now. It was impudence of me to say that I could go one better than the Bombardier; and I shall always regret that, in my stupid and hot-headed way, I thought so little of him as a fighter. I don't now,

Carpentier, for now I know you are a wonderful fellow. If only you were a Yorkshireman!" And then, after a loud, boyish laugh, he asked: "But, I say, were you really all out to finish me right away? If you weren't, I shall never forgive you."

"Mr. Mitchell," I replied, "if I could have knocked your head off at old Lerda's school you would not have been here."

And with that good George Mitchell was happy.

CHAPTER VIII

FIGHTS IN 1914

FOLLOWING my second match with Wells I met that very good and genial Irishman, Pat O'Keefe, on January 19, 1914, at Nice. I knocked him out in a couple of rounds. From then until the following March I did no serious fighting; merely did I engage in exhibitions.

There had come to Paris again Joe Jeannette, and I think it will be agreed that at that time he was near to being a world's champion. From the first day all Frenchmen began to talk about this especially handsome negro, because of his tremendous contest with Sam McVea. I fell to wondering whether I should ever consider myself good and big enough to fight him. My second victory over Wells, my quick trample over O'Keefe, led me to ask Descamps to seek a match with Jeannette.

Descamps found Jeannette not only willing but very anxious to meet me, and on Saturday night, March 21, 1914, we took the ring at Lunar Park. More than 6,000 people looked on in a building gay with colour and ablaze with countless lights.

Clang went the bell. Descamps patted me on my shoulders and I hurried to shake hands with Jeannette, who appeared to me as some great big bronze statue. Fighting a negro is a weird business, and it was as much as I could do to refrain from dwelling upon the colour scheme which we struck.

In all my fights I believe in aggression, and I decided that if ever it were necessary to make haste and never stop fighting, this was the time. Standing on my toes, I went for Jeannette at once, but was sadly out of my reckoning with my left hand. Jeannette, by an almost imperceptible twist of his head, caused me to miss badly, and in a twinkling he had hit me on my right eye. There was little or no weight behind the blow, and I was able to shoot out my left and land with such force that Jeannette's head went back with a snap. The negro set his great white teeth on parade, smiling good-humouredly, and then we got to clinches. The bulging-eyed Cuny, who was the ringmaster, pushed us, and as we broke I hit Jeannette with left and right on the jaw, and down he went.

People positively screamed, and, like myself, believed that I was already far on the road to victory. But Jeannette was not the type of man to be put out with one blow. He simply shook his

woolly head, as would a dog when it comes out of the water, and stood before me apparently little the worse, although when he clinched I knew that he had been badly shaken. His breath came in gasps.

I was determined to do my boxing at long range, for I had discovered that I was much the faster man; obviously, Jeannette had decided to fight at close quarters. Try as I would, I could not insist that we should always box at a distance. The cunning, the craftiness, the defence of this black man were wonderful, and as some magnet he drew me into many long spells of in-fighting.

Descamps, with much wisdom, was for ever saying, "Box him, Georges." But it was not until the eighth round that I was able to demand that Jeannette should box openly. Then I have never been so sure that I would win. This eighth round was all mine. I raced through it; I made it a helter-skelter, and at the end Jeannette was palpably distressed. He had been outboxed and often befooled, and for once, when we did get to grips, I did better than he did.

Even now I can remember every incident of the round. I have never boxed, I have never fought better or with greater sureness of winning. I boxed and fought as a man filled with ecstasy. Here was Jeannette—big, silent, tense, brave. Under the

light of the cinema apparatus his bronze had, so I imagined, turned into green. But his eyes were all sparkle—there was no tiredness in them; yet each time I hit him I knew I hurt him very much.

To the body, to the face, to the head, to the jaw did I send blows, but not a muscle did this remarkable man of colour allow to quiver. I almost despaired of making any impression upon his cast-iron frame. I was almost frantic—and then, with all the viciousness in me, I drove my right to his stomach, and Jeannette half staggered! His legs crossed, he knocked at the knees.

"*Finis*, Georges," cried Descamps, now red-hot and hoarse with excitement.

I sent out my left hand and brought the right over to the jaw, and Jeannette reeled. He was dazed, and only by holding did he manage to survive the round. How—neither I nor anybody else could tell. If ever a man should have been beaten, Jeannette should have been at this particular stage. But he was not, and do you know, he left his corner for the ninth meeting like a man who had had a miracle performed upon him. Instead, as I expected, of coming up as a tired and thoroughly beaten man, as he appeared to be a few moments before, he took the centre of the ring almost completely fresh. I could not understand it at all. It was amazing!

As for myself, I was now beginning to feel the effects of the fight. Still, I commenced the ninth round by getting home a right and left to the jaw, and followed with a right, left and right.

Blood now trickled from Jeannette's mouth, his thick lips had become thicker, and I too made a very sorry and soiled picture. I also was bleeding and splashed with blood; both my eyes were dreadfully puffed, and there were many red patches on my body, telling of the hard knocks which I had received. I was aching much, but never at any time was I in such a condition as Jeannette.

Half-way through the ninth round I feinted with my left, and I swung with my right. But Jeannette ducked so cleverly that I missed by many inches. And I was terribly conscious that I had been fooled.

My blood was up. "Now or never," I decided, and before the end of the round I had done much execution with my left hand. Jeannette leaned on me and held, and was twice cautioned.

"Give him the knock-out," implored Descamps during the interval in my corner.

"How can I?" I answered. "You will have to bring the guillotine to finish him. He is many men rolled into one. I hurt him very much one minute; the next I cannot hurt him. Bring me a sledge-hammer!"

But how very tired I was! My aches became worse. My eyes were very swollen. But I could see him quite well. No sooner had we begun the tenth round than I slipped. Like the gentleman and good sportsman that he is, Jeannette, amid many "Bravos," lifted me to my feet. I made many points with my left and right, but Jeannette, unbelievably strong, forced himself to get to grips, and I suffered in the in-fighting at which Jeannette was a master.

There was more than a suggestion of wrestling in the twelfth round when, I would have it set on record, Jeannette fought his best. I had been terribly punished. My face was covered with blood, and I felt myself rocking. It was as much as I could do to last the round out. When I went to my corner I was a much battered man, but I rallied in the next round and gave as much punishment as I received. But I was really in a very bad way. Yet I felt sure that I would win. I went all out to end the fight in the thirteenth round. I was half crazy. I did not care what happened to me. Into Jeannette did I rush. I did not think or trouble about a guard; I sought to pummel his body. Jeannette responded with equal vigour. I almost fought myself to a standstill, and my legs would scarce carry me to my corner.

And then the fifteenth, which was the last

round. It was the greatest, the most thrilling of all! People, I could tell, were hanging upon every little incident, every blow. I fought like a demon, though my body was cracking and crumbling. And Jeannette leaned on and held.

Then the verdict!

Jeannette, M. Franz Reichel decided, was the winner.

It was impossible for me to realize that I had lost. By what process of reasoning M. Reichel arrived at his decision I shall never be able to tell.

Descamps erupted like some volcano. He beat his head, he scratched and tore himself.

Jeannette, thoroughly tired, sat on the edge of the ring, his legs dangling. His friends tumbled over one another to congratulate him, but he heeded them not. Merely did he say, "Guess I'll hurry off home. I am tired."

The verdict was the subject of much comment; almost without exception every newspaper thought I had won; at least I am positive that I drew. Of the perfect honesty and integrity and good sportsmanship of M. Reichel there is not the slightest question. But I am certain that he made a mistake. And just this little story.

A few days before I was to fight Beckett, Mr. "Peggy" Bettinson entertained me to lunch at

the National Sporting Club. In a discussion of my many contests, Mr. Bettinson recalled my battle with Jeannette.

"Oh, yes," he said, "you beat Jeannette. I was astonished at Reichel's decision, and many times have I tried to understand how he made Jeannette to be the winner. The only explanation I can offer is this: Reichel before the fight must have read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and conceived an affection for the black race."

But I have no regrets. At the time I was intensely angry. However, my fight with Joe Jeannette was one that any man would have enjoyed. For though he was black, Jeannette was white through. No more chivalrous man ever took the ring.

Jeannette, his manager, Mr. Dan McKettrick, and various members of the American party before they left Paris, by their sympathy and whole-hearted commendation, did much to make me forget the bitterness of my defeat. As for Descamps, he had me believe that my showing against Jeannette was the best possible proof that we had decided well when I set out as a heavy-weight.

For myself, I felt very tired, and from March until the following June of 1914 I spent most of my time holidaying. Now I could well afford to rest,

for I was richer than I had ever dreamed that I should be. I had still to reach my majority, and yet the days when Descamps and myself were obliged to go about with empty pockets, when on some Sundays we were glad of a modest lunch as a reward for our "turn" at this and that estaminet, seemed to be all a dream.

From the earliest days of my association with Descamps I had been taught to be thrifty, and before I met Gunboat Smith, the American, less than a month before the war, I was worth thousands of pounds a year.

The first obligation I discharged immediately I realized that I had become rich was to install my father and mother in the Café du Champion, in Lens, and this they carried on with much success until the Germans came. But of the wrecking of my parents' home I will write later.

After my defeat by Jeannette the next contest I had was not a very serious one. As a matter of fact it was of no account at all, and my opponent, one Philippe Robinson, I knocked out in three rounds at Reviers.

At about this time the fashion—more especially in America—was to talk and write about "White Hopes." There was a whole army of them. The popular impression in America was that Gunboat

Smith was about the best of the bunch, and towards the end of June I was seen in Paris by a representative of the late Dick Burge, and asked whether I would fight Smith.

The inducement was £4,000. I did not hesitate, and I went into training at Manitot. Smith, with Bob Armstrong as his trainer, one of the quaintest and most remarkable negroes I have ever met, was soon in England, and I was much amused when I read that at a reception given to various newspaper men he declared that the fight would be a "cinch" for him.

I allowed nothing to trouble me in my training, which I did in private. To prepare for a contest with the merely curious looking on is an entirely wrong thing to do; at least, such is my opinion.

Gunboat Smith and his sparring partners set themselves up at Harrow. He was almost daily visited by writers on boxing and members of the public. His work was for everybody to see, and *entre nous*, Descamps, through a trusted friend, saw much of the Gunboat in training, and the knowledge he gained he, of course, imparted to me, so that although I had never seen the American, I knew all about him long before I took the ring at Olympia. Despite his height and his complete indifference to ceremony—I should liken Smith to a rough-and-

tumble fighter—I had the feeling from the day that I contracted to meet him that I would win.

The coming of the match was awaited with the keenest expectancy. It was written that London had gone boxing mad, but I was wholly unprepared for what happened when I arrived at Charing Cross two or three days before the fight.

I left Paris with but few of my friends to see me off and wish me "good luck," and as Descamps and myself threw dice on the train, we never imagined for a single moment that many thousands of people would be waiting for us in London. As the train steamed into the great railway terminus in the Strand I said to Descamps: "There must be a riot. Look!"

The station was packed with people. No sooner did we put our heads out of the carriage window than a band struck up the anthem of my country, and then—oh! what cheering! Before I had time to realize what was happening I was pounced upon and carried to an open carriage. I was scared. I trembled all over. Men and women rushed and tore about and scrambled; they slapped my back; more than one woman kissed me. I would have run away. I knew I was deathly pale. In a stupid, half-conscious way I bowed and smiled. Never before nor since have I endured such an experience. I

feared the horses that were to draw the carriage into which I had been put would stampede; the band persisted in playing music that threatened to split my ear; and all the time thousands of people were shouting and cheering. And when the signal was given for me to be taken to the Hôtel Métropole, which was close by, it was only after considerable difficulty that we could force our way.

The traffic in the Strand was held up, and from the station to Northumberland Avenue I was pulled through lines of shouting people. I was glad to rush into the hotel and hide myself in my room. But I was not to enjoy the quiet I would have had.

Outside, people—many thousands of them—had given themselves over to cheering, and at the request of the manager of the hotel I appeared at one of the windows. The sight I saw made me dizzy, and I do believe that had Descamps not come to the rescue I should have fallen headlong into the street below. I bowed and bowed, and waved my hand, but it was not enough. Only a speech would satisfy the people. And I spoke to them, but what I said I do not know. The spectacle spread before me was so amazing that I could neither speak nor think coherently.

There was I—a French boy—being nestled to the bosom of a strange people. What had I done?

Beaten their champion—just a prize-fighter, I knew I was; and as I muttered and spluttered and grew pale, and had no steadiness in my legs, I conjured up before me the tall Bombardier. In the crowd I fancied I saw him, stretched in his corner at the National Sporting Club, beaten by practically one punch in a match that had set all England alight. And then I was at Olympia against this Gunboat Smith, whom I had never seen, and I wondered what the end would be. Would I win? Would he do what he had advertised he would do?—make me sorry and sad. Would he, by his triumph, take my place in the affections of the English people?

So did I speculate, and then, positively scared and frightened, I was permitted to retire to my room. I had had a rough crossing, and though it was but mid-afternoon I was glad to be put to bed, for I was utterly exhausted. But sleep came fitfully. I would clutch at it and then lose it. Sleep was some will-o'-the-wisp that memorable afternoon, and until the night of July 16 I was restless and fidgety, so that Descamps worried and wondered and feared.

It was not until an hour before the time for us to take the ring that I was my normal self. I then felt as steady as a rock; I had no doubt about myself,

and I poked fun at Descamps because he looked as if he were about to be executed.

The fight to me will ever be an ugly dream. It was the biggest, the most lucrative, and yet the greatest disappointment in my career. I shut my eyes and see and feel every detail of it. Wonderful crowd at the ringside—magnificent, because it told of the world. The telegraph was ticking a few feet from my corner, and thus America, itching for the result, was linked up with the battle-ground. The scene, everything, was wonderful.

When I came from my dressing-room and looked round, the nervousness from which I suffered upon my arrival in London returned. I was not frightened; I clung to the belief that I would win, but the sight made it hard for me to cure my imagination. I wanted to stand and gaze and wonder. The effort it cost me to acquire something like a normal state of mind was tremendous. But I did steady myself, and then I took my first look at Gunboat Smith.

There he was, with the giant negro, Armstrong, by his side—all angles, huge, awkward, with a monstrously big fist. I was giving away fully a stone in weight, and as I took stock of Smith I whispered to Descamps that I did not like the look of him at all.

"Nonsense," said Descamps. "Georges, my son, half a dozen rounds, and you will have won."

I smiled—it was, I am sure, a very sickly smile. And Smith I could heard drawling out to Armstrong something about "this French guy."

"Seconds out!" "Time!" called Mr. J. T. Hulls, who held the watch. Mr. Eugene Corri was the referee, and the judges were Mr. Joe Garreau, of New York, and M. Victor Breyer, of Paris.

At the end of the first round I had discovered that Smith was as slow and as awkward as he looked. For one who came to England with such a high reputation, he was almost agricultural in his ways. His greatest asset was his strength, and his capacity for delivering what was described as an "occipital punch"—a blow delivered downwards to the back of the neck, which American critics asserted was a sure sleep-producer.

As customary, I pursued aggressive tactics. In Smith's corner were seconds who thought the use of uncomplimentary remarks quite fair and part of the game.

"Eddie, it's easy for you. Don't hurt him," they called to Smith when, after I had punched him with left and right, he came after me. In the matter of boxing I showed that I was his superior. Almost at once he began to hit low, and when

Mr. Corri said, "Higher with your right hand, Smith!" he begged my pardon; but the next time he was cautioned he merely grunted, and in a whisper vowed that he would soon flatten me out.

By the time the fourth round was reached the American was puffing and blowing. I had hurt him very much about the body. When I entered this round Descamps advised me to do everything to knock him out. François was certain that Smith was distressed. His advice I knew to be sound, and as I was then feeling grand, never better in my life, I went all out to finish the contest. By this time I could not see a soul save Smith. I heard no noise; I heeded no chatter. Only Smith mattered. I was now my everyday self. The "Gunboat" was palpably anxious, and there was surprise in his face. I feinted with my left and brought the right to the chin with all my might. Down went the American on his knees.

"Stand back!" cautioned Mr. Corri, as I stood on tiptoe ready to spring at Smith should he get up.

The excitement was intense, and I tingled all over. I was sure that I had won. The "Gunboat," with eyes semi-glazed, remained on his knees.

Then bang went the gong, and away I cantered to my corner, the happiest youth in the world.

"It is over—I have won," I was saying.

"Bravo, Georges! Good Georges!" cried Descamps.

And then—cruel surprise!—instead of the fight being over, I learned that the gong did not mean that Smith had been counted out, only that he had been saved by "time."

Mr. Hulls afterwards declared that Smith was on the floor for thirteen seconds, but Mr. Corri contended that since it had been agreed that he should have sole charge of the counting, it was for him to decide. It is possible that Mr. Corri, in the excitement of the moment, forgot to count straight away. At any rate, the watch showed that Gunboat Smith was put out in the fourth round by one of the best blows I have ever delivered.

When I realized that I had to resume I was sick at heart.

In the fifth round I again did well; I was always beating Smith. In the next the end came, but the finish was one that no man would have. I was declared the winner on a foul. This is what happened.

Missing Smith with a swinging right, I stumbled to my knees. The American said that I went down because I was hit on the jaw. This is not the fact. Smith did flick me on the jaw, but I did not feel

the blow at all. I went on my knees because my failure to land with my right caused me to lose my balance. However, while I rested on one knee, Gunboat Smith, unable to restrain himself, and with, as I thought, something like murder in his eyes, came up to me and hit me so hard at the back of the neck that I thought I had been beheaded.

Mr. Corri immediately disqualified Smith. There was, as might be expected, a scene of considerable uproar. Smith and his friends stoutly denied that a foul had been committed. Smith admitted that he had struck me when I was down, but he declared that the blow was unintentional, that at the worst it was a very little blow, and, apart from everything, he should be given the fight because Descamps had invaded the ring when the contest was in progress.

As to the blow which caused Smith to lose being a light one, I can assure him that it was a very lusty, vicious blow, and I did not recover from the effects of it for some considerable time after I was taken back to my hotel. And when I came to I was as sorry as Smith himself that the fight had had such an undesirable ending. To win on a foul is a heart-breaking experience. Smith considered he was the unluckiest man alive, and his criticisms of Mr. Corri did not suggest that he had a high regard for British sense of fair play.

There was talk of a return match, and had not the war come it is possible that we should have taken the ring a second time.

It was arranged that I should remain in England and fight Young Ahearn, a native of Preston, Lancashire, who had spent most of his days in America. He was one of a string of boxers under the management of Mr. Dan McKettrick, and some little time previously, at the National Sporting Club, had beaten Sergeant Braddock, then voted to be about the hardest fighter among middle-weights in England. Many competent judges saw in Ahearn, known in the States as "the dancing master," a second Ted Pritchard. There was not the least doubt that at that period Ahearn was a splendid, even a marvellous boxer.

We signed articles, and I was to be paid £5,000 whatever the result. But the war broke out, and I immediately let it be known that I would not proceed with the contest.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT WAR: I BECOME A FLYING MAN

DESCAMPS, being much older than myself, was bound to go to war. This I knew, and when the news came to me that Germany had taken the field against my country, I rushed to Descamps and found the little man already packing up.

"Georges," he said as he wiped tears from his eyes, "after all these years the time has come when we must part. I am off to war; you, my boy, are not yet old enough. You will stay behind until you are called up."

"If you think that I will allow you to go by yourself, then you do not know your Georges. The war has come, so be it. I, too, will go to war, and as long as it lasts I will not take the ring again. My boxing career from this very day is finished. It will be resumed when peace comes."

"But war is not for boys, Georges," declared Descamps. "And you are but a boy. Rest—maybe it will soon be over; and your François will be your manager again."

"To-day—now—I go to volunteer," I persisted,

and Descamps, having packed the last of our trunks, called up Mr. Horatio Bottomley, who was giving the purse for the match with Ahearn, and called it off.

The next morning Descamps and myself were entertained to luncheon by Mr. Bottomley, who invited several well-known sportsmen to join us.

In the meantime Descamps and myself had been to the French Consulate in London, he to report and I to volunteer for service. I was determined to go to the battlefield by hook or crook.

I put my case to the French Consulate, and it was arranged that we should leave London on August 4, but that was not possible. It was three days later before we could start our journey. And how different it was from any journey between England and France we had ever made before! Apart from the vile sea there was endless chopping and changing on the railway; no comfort at all, only headaching excitement. And when I did reach Paris I was sick and weary at heart, too hungry to eat, and filled with wonderment as to what I should be told off to do and where I would be sent.

Paris was an unreal Paris—a mad Paris; its gaiety had gone—only tenseness and sorrow and tragedy remained. The war was but a few days old, and yet I discovered that already not one, but all my friends

had left home—were even then in the thick of the fight, and not one but several had been killed.

As my class had not been mobilized I had the right to choose the branch of service I desired to enter. So I plumped right away for the aviation section, believing it would take but a few weeks before I was flying in the air. And the prospect gave me much joy. But I was quickly disenchanted.

The right to decide what service I would go into was conceded immediately by the recruiting officials, though when I look back I am sure the old, bitten-eared sergeant at the recruiting depot smiled in his sleeve at the highly coloured, entrancing picture he knew instinctively I was painting in my mind.

"Aviation?" he inquired. "Certainly."

And in less time than it takes to write, I was told to take myself off to a camp at St. Cyr, near Versailles, about fifteen miles from Paris.

When I decided on a flying career I knew absolutely nothing about an aeroplane or flying. All I knew was that an aeroplane was a machine on which one flew.

The officer to whom I told what I wanted to do smiled cynically.

"Oh, yes," he said. "I have heard all about you, Carpentier. You are the boxing person, aren't you? Ugh! Drive a car?"

"Yes," I replied, wondering vaguely what on earth had the driving of a car to do with flying.

"That's good," he said. "I want a driver for myself, and you are the very man for the job."

With that he kind of side-stepped and was gone, leaving me to try and realize that it was the rôle of chauffeur I would be asked to play.

What a come-down! What a flop! I thought.

However, common sense told me that it was no use protesting, and though I thought a great deal I got ready to be a driver.

For many weeks did I drive this officer to and from St. Cyr to Paris, and were it not that I longed for the life of a real soldier the job would have been most agreeable.

It was not long before I was made to feel that the position of a chauffeur was an extremely difficult and impossible one for me to fill.

One day, after I had taken my officer to Paris and was tuning up the car, a roguish little poilu came and looked on, and, with a contemptuous curl of the lip, addressed me after this fashion:

"So you are Georges Carpentier, the great fighting man! It's a lot of fighting you will do. You'll never see the front. I like you as a soldier. They'll keep you in cotton-wool, my boy; you are too

precious to be shot at. It's not the likes of you, my son, who is to be shot at."

What he said stung. The temptation to knock him down was very real and great. But I bit my lip and forgave the poilu. My position, though not of my own seeking, invited the jibe. But I was hurt, and at the earliest opportunity pointed out to my officer, who was my good friend, that unless I gave up my job I should be put in a false position.

At last—oh, great joy!—orders came from the War Office that young men of my class must go to the front. At once I put in an application to train for a pilot.

I had to wait many days for a reply, but at last I was ordered to proceed to a special training school, known as the Camp d'Avord, which was near Lemans. It was on January 3, 1915, that I arrived there. The work was exciting, and it was only after three months' strict application and determination to succeed that I got through my tests. There were many days when I feared that I would not succeed in doing so.

It was on May 13, 1915, that there came a certificate which passed me as an Army pilot. My joy was unbounded. Never did I stop to think of awful possibilities. The idea that I was about to set out on a mission with Death always at my side

never occurred to me. Getting my things together with all the enthusiasm of an overgrown boy, and suffering to be teased by my companions who were to remain behind, I was soon ready to depart for the main aviation base or depot, which was at Le Bourget, just outside Paris.

After spending several weeks in comparative idleness, I was ordered to join a flying squad at the front under the command of Captain H——, a splendid type of man, always a sportsman, and an officer who won much distinction and not a little fame as a specialist in bombing raids. As luck would have it, I was under Captain H—— for only a brief period, because my machine was not suitable for the kind of work which I was expected to perform at Le Bourget. So to another squadron, formed for reconnoitring purposes, I was sent.

From the very first day after I left Le Bourget I lived in the thick of the fighting for fifteen months afterwards. My feelings on the first occasion I sailed away on my aeroplane, in company with a passenger who was to act either as an observer, photographer, or to register for the artillery, produced a sensation common to a boxer when he is about to enter into a contest with a man who by repute is a terrible deadly fellow—one whose style and method he did not know, whose height and

weight and strength might be beyond him. I was like a boxer who had rushed madly into signing a contract to fight without knowing the conditions.

But my feelings, instead of setting me wondering what the result would be, only heightened my keenness to get to grips and take my chances. I relished the adventure of it all. I felt that my machine would do anything for me; it would do anything I commanded. There was the zest, the piquancy of the thing—to be shot at, to have machine trouble, to have an unhappy accident, I did not dream of. I felt that there was no sport like it; the mind, the body, the soul—everything tingled. To flirt with and cheat Death, to do what now seems impossible, was glorious intoxication. Bullets have many times whistled round and about my aeroplane; shells have often burst perilously near to it; frequently has it rocked ominously, like some drunken thing, and on one occasion, when I was flying over the Vosges mountains, my motor stopped.

The silence was indescribable. And in silence I believe I grinned and leered. I clutched to the hope that I should live through it. The sense of quiet, the feeling of utter and dreadful loneliness, of impotency, made me shudder. The great mountains down below, that seemed to beckon and jeer and make ugly faces at me, quickened my senses.

I dared to risk a landing. And I prayed that the mountains would hold and catch me.

Down, down, down I glided, gently, gracefully, like some majestic bird. Would I land? Down, down, down I went.

Imagine yourself at the ringside. You see things which a boxer neither sees nor feels; it is possible that you see one or other of the fighters waging a battle with all the odds against him; you feel pain when he feels no pain; the blows hurt you more than they hurt the boxer, for the reason that he is made impervious to pain by being in the very throes of the fight. His concentration on beating his opponent lessens his consciousness that he is being hammered into defeat.

This, if you can understand my simile, was exactly my position when I plunged into the fighting at Champagne. I saw in it at that time nothing abnormal; it was just a phase of the war, and, like every other airman, the fact that I was called upon to fly for hours every day with the possibility, even probability, of being potted and done for I regarded as part and parcel of my ordinary work.

To go up alone as I did, to give sight to the gunners, I counted as an ordinary circumstance. When you get used to your machine your confidence in it is remarkable; you come to believe that it is

fool-proof, that it will not take to performing impossible capers. And for some time I flew over the enemy's country without experiencing anything more alarming than being shot at from below.

It was when I had my first fight high in the air that I realized I really lived in a world of touch and go. Still, like every aviator, I longed for a scrap. I am happy to say that although my machine was not of the speediest type and lacked the mobility of the true or accepted fighting machine, I came out of half-a-dozen combats without a scratch. You would think, perhaps, when you go for an enemy, and when quickness of decision and perfect control of your machine mean everything, that you fear awful possibilities. But you do nothing of the kind. You live and gloat in your confidence in yourself and your machine.

In September, 1915, I had a terrible experience. The weather was foggy, and flying meant so much groping. I felt like a boxer whose head is sent swimming by a crack on the jaw. It was necessary, so foggy was it, in order to keep my gunners posted with the progress of our offensive, that I should fly very low. Time after time I was subjected to rifle fire from the German infantry, and my 'plane was riddled with bullets. Yet I escaped unhurt.

It was as the result of this bit of work that I received my first mention in the Orders of the Day. In them it was recorded:

"On September 25 had no hesitation in flying at a height less than 200 metres over the enemy lines during the action. Showed in many instances remarkable bravery and energy, returning home with his machine pierced by bullets and shell splinters."

And at a later date I was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palm.

Our unit had suffered so heavily that we were rested. It was about this time that I received news of my father, mother and sister. I had not had a single message as to how they were faring since the Germans seized Lens in October, 1914. The message came to me through the good offices of a German soldier.

It appears that while Lens was hemmed in and taken a German N.C.O. was billeted in my parents' house. Strange, for the Germans do not like boxing, this soldier knew much about the ring, also Rugby football, and he told my people that he had seen me box. When he left them he promised that somehow he would get in touch with me and let me

know that they were alive and well. And to his everlasting credit he redeemed his promise. Through some of his friends, who were in Switzerland, this German managed to get a short note to me. He is the one German I would forgive. His note I shall ever treasure.

Following a much-needed rest at Camp de Mailly, I returned to the firing line to join a new squad., which was quartered at a place right in front of Verdun. The German push in 1916 had just commenced. All the fighting I had experienced and seen before was not to be compared with the fighting at Verdun. I have read Dante's "Inferno." Verdun might very well have been the inferno created by Dante. Together with my countrymen, I lived in hell for six long months. It was as if the whole world was vomiting its spite against a community of folk locked up. We French were a wall; the Germans were a mighty battering-ram. All the devices of the devil were brought into play against us. We rocked and swayed, but we never broke. I reached the immortal sector at the end of March, 1916.

One volunteer from each flying unit was asked to serve as liaison man to the infantry. His duty was to play the part of a "connecting agent," to keep the infantry staff informed of the precise

position of the troops—both German and French; of necessity he was obliged to fly low and under enemy fire; he had to run the gauntlet of anti-aircraft guns, also machine guns and rifles. The liaison man was scout, detective, adventurer-in-chief; the ears, the signpost, the watch-dog, the guide to his infantry. On many occasions, so as to discharge my duty properly and thoroughly, I flew as low as one hundred yards, and right in the heart of the battle.

Although the work of a liaison man (for such I became) was perilous in the extreme, it had not the brilliance, the exhilaration of sheer fighting in the air. There is nothing so splendidly spectacular as climbing ever so high, and then darting to meet a Boche and engage in a fight to the death.

To see an air combat is to have a hair-raising experience, but to watch a liaison man you would imagine that he is merely flying. The spectator cannot realize, because he is so far away, that oftener than not the pilot is passing through fire, that he is a target to be shot at.

But I was pleased to have been a liaison man instead of a hunting aviator during the gigantic struggle at Verdun. The life I lived was a glorious one; it fascinated me enormously, and it gave me

an opportunity of knowing and understanding the heroism of the French infantry.

Of all the spectacles which I witnessed, none made such an impression upon me as that which I saw on October 2, when the grand smash was made for the famous fort of Douaumont. Our infantry had orders to get there at all costs. Their enthusiasm, their high spirits, their determination, and their confidence that they would succeed were such that nothing on earth could have held them back. I witnessed all the phases of the attack from my aeroplane, from the beginning of the intense bombardment to the tragic, awe-inspiring moment when our brave poilus swarmed like millions of ants over the parapets and rushed with an all-conquering rush across the shell-swept area to the fort where the Germans lay in readiness for them with guns and every conceivable death-dealing device.

What an attack! It was unbelievable, indescribable. The fight did not ebb and flow, for our men were inspired; they were drunk with enthusiasm, and, as I watched them from above, the temptation to swoop down, to get out of my machine and become part of the sweeping, unstoppable tide of infantrymen was hard to conquer. I have lived and feasted and gloated on those moments many times, and then, when I have given myself over to reflection,

CARPENTIER WHEN AN AIRMAN

the feeling that the great world will never know the countless deeds of heroism has made me mad. We may only know isolated instances of giant bravery.

It has been set down that the aviator played an imperishable part in effecting the capture of Douaumont, and my observer and myself were complimented on the field by the general commanding the division which took the fort.

Once again my 'plane was riddled with bullets, and one bullet went right through my helmet. A few days later my name again appeared in the Orders of the Day, with this mention:

"Pilot of great skill and bravery, ever willing for the most perilous missions. Brilliantly distinguished himself during the attack on Douaumont, October 2, 1916, by flying over the lines at a very low altitude during more than four hours, thus showing complete disregard for danger."

As a result I was decorated with the Médaille Militaire. It was presented to me just behind Verdun by President Poincaré on the day he visited the immortal battlefield on November 5, 1916, in the presence of General Nivelle.

I have publicly confessed that on my arrival in London in July, 1914, for the fight with Gunboat

Smith I was absolutely frightened by the reception given to me by the English people, but I do not think I have suffered a more emphatic knock-out than when the French President pinned the Médaille Militaire on my breast by the side of the Croix de Guerre. Following the decoration, I was on the point of collapse. Reaction had set in. I was sick and weary, and my mind began to dwell upon what I had experienced and endured for six long, murderous months. It was necessary that I should take to my bed, and after a while I was declared to be unfit for my duties. I was sent on an ambulance to hospital behind the lines. My condition was never really dangerous, but it was serious, and eventually the doctors said that I was unfitted for further active service.

CHAPTER X

MILITARY BOXING

For some time I stayed on the Riviera, and gradually got well, but I never was in a condition to fight again. So it came about that I was sent to a military school at Joinville le Pont, which is a few miles from Paris, and there I became a physical instructor. My life and work there made a new man of me. I began to gain weight and I lost nervousness, and the day came when I longed to return to the ring. I had not been on active service long when I feared that I should never box again. I doubted whether I should live through it all, and I even feared to put the gloves on and have a friendly spar. I could scarce trust myself.

But one day I chanced to be in Paris, and looked in at one of the several boxing academies in the city. There young men were boxing, among them Badoud, the middle-weight, who once defeated that wonderfully clever boxer, Johnny Basham. I longed to have a try to see whether I could really box as I used to do, but I was afraid to blunder in the presence of so many people.

Badoud must have known what was passing through my mind, for he said, "What about sparring with me?" Excellent idea, everybody declared, and after much persuasion and with not a little fear, I took off my tunic and put on the gloves.

Now, Badoud is the type of boxer who could not spar gently though he tried ever so hard. I let him know that I was in no fighting shape, that I had done no boxing for four years, and asked him not to be too severe. This was agreed, but no sooner had we struck a fighting attitude than Badoud came after me like some infuriated bull and hit me so hard that he hurt me very much. I remonstrated with him, but he heeded me not, and again he pummelled me for all he was worth, so that I feared that he would put me out.

Without saying a word, I feinted with my left and landed with my right so that I knocked Badoud out. He remained in oblivion for half an hour. I was quite satisfied. I knew that I still carried a knock-out punch; I was certain that I would come back to the ring, and I took the first opportunity of acquainting Descamps with what had happened to Badoud.

Here I would explain that Descamps, when he presented himself for active service, was, after

examination, rejected as unfit. And his rejection led to his becoming a splendidly prosperous manufacturer. In this way:

One day he was walking down one of the boulevards in Paris, and met a former amateur French boxer who, like himself, was physically unfitted for war. He told Descamps that he was engaged in making boxes used for packing Camembert cheeses, and having a high regard for the business qualities of François, invited him to become his partner, which Descamps did. The business quickly grew, for Descamps was keen.

And to-day he flourishes exceedingly at La Guerche, some 150 miles from Paris. There he is very happy, and it is there that I do all my training.

During the whole of my time at Joinville le Pont I engaged in all manner of games. I learned to play Rugby football, affecting a position in the three-quarter line, and were it not that now I cannot afford to take the risk of getting injured, I should strive to get a place in my country's fifteen. I went in for sprinting, and it is said that I am the second fastest runner in France.

When I saw the war coming to a close I began to box pretty frequently in exhibitions for charity, but it was not until after the armistice that I again took to boxing seriously. Then I sparred at several

of the big camps in France. To one, where the Americans were, I was invited.

I was glad to go, but when I got into the ring, scarcely trained and absolutely unfitted for anything approaching strenuous fighting, and saw that the soldier I was to spar with was a second edition of Jess Willard, I began to quake, and more so when the big fellow plainly showed that he was all out to knock me through the ropes. How his fellows enjoyed the prospect of his doing so! At once he rushed at me, but I side-stepped, and he missed badly and sadly, and before he knew where he was I chipped him on the jaw, and he lay sprawling on the floor of the ring, much to my relief, for had this American giant got close he would have made me very sorry.

One of the most enjoyable boxing exhibitions I had while I was still in the Army was at the Palais d'Etat, Brussels. General Sir David Watson, through the Hon. Francis Grosvenor, secured for me leave from my military school so that I might appear at a tournament arranged for the amusement of the officers and men of the 4th Canadian Division, then stationed in Belgium. The war was then over, and I was awaiting demobilization. Some little time previously I had signed a contract to fight Dick Smith at Strasbourg, and also to fight the best-

proved English heavy-weight in Great Britain—either Bombardier Wells, Frank Goddard, or Joe Beckett—my fee to be £5,000.

I doubt whether there has been a more successful military boxing tournament than that got up by the officers of the 4th Canadian Division. The Palais d'Etat was crowded, and to see the boxing came the King of Belgium. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed. How very different was it from the time I first ventured to Brussels in 1910 to fight Wally Pickard, the Englishman, and later in the same year, when I was beaten by his countryman, Buck Shine!

First, I was entertained by General Watson and the Staff of the Canadian Division at their club, and when on the Saturday afternoon I appeared at the Palais d'Etat, the desire to get back to boxing proper, to return to civilian life, to begin anew the work of fortune-building, to see whether five years of soldiering had robbed me of my ability to box, burned within me. Oh, the glamour, the magic of the ring! For five long years I had been away from the public, and now when I appeared as Carpentier the boxer many thousand men of a country other than mine rose and cheered me to the echo.

I was taken to brave King Albert and introduced;

the Duke of Atholl, General Currie, head of the Canadian Forces, many great men was I privileged to speak to on this day, and before I got into the ring I saw for the first time since 1914 real, earnest, tense boxing, for the Canadian soldier-boxer, to be his real self, boxes with his heart and soul.

The time came for me to spar, and when I discovered that I was to meet a British soldier named Child, once an Army champion, I went to him and asked him to give to our bout the appearance of a real fight. And he did. He pulled out all that was best in him, and when it was over it was said we had done uncommonly well.

The King of Belgium shook me by the hand and hoped that when I returned to the ring I would know only success. And I remembered that after I had fought Bombardier Wells at Ghent there was a big outcry against boxing in Belgium. It was brutal, it was not wanted, and it was decided that henceforth professional boxing would not be permitted in the country. And here was the King of Belgium commending my exposition.

Belgium, of course, will box. She is bound to box. All men, all nations must box, and the day will come when glove-fighting throughout the Continent will be the sport of the people.

My contest with the English light-weight, Dick

Smith, was fast approaching, but I feared that my military duties would not permit my training thoroughly. However, I was fortunate to secure indefinite leave, and I left Paris for the home of Descamps at La Guerche. Here he had built a gymnasium; attached to his house were grounds in which I could run and kick a football. With my dogs I would roam the countryside; there could be no more ideal training centre than La Guerche. It is a little, old-fashioned, quiet world. There are no glittering lights; life is just one wonderful round of peacefulness.

Yet I was not entirely happy in my preparation for Dick Smith. At first I was filled with joy at the prospect of getting back to the ring again, to be with Descamps, to win again the affections of the people; but as the day of the fight approached I began to wonder and doubt whether I would make good. There were times when going back to my old life again seemed unreal. I had wanted to get out of the Army, and now I was free, though I had yet to be demobilized, I hankered after my companions at Joinville le Pont. And how I did miss my games of Rugby football! I did not thrive on my training at all; I was worried and heart-sick. It was not deemed possible to have the fight at Strasbourg, as was intended, and it was put

on at the Cirque de Paris on Saturday night, July 19.

I had a great ovation when I appeared in the ring, but I was not my old confident self. It was the popular impression that I would beat Smith without a great deal of trouble, and because I did not win until the eighth round my performance was said to be unsatisfactory. The impression was created also among the majority of the English critics who were at the ringside that I was bound to lose against Joe Beckett, who by defeating first Bombardier Wells and then Frank Goddard, had qualified to meet me for the European title of which I was the holder. Mr. Bernard Mortimer, who saw my contest with Smith, and was one of the judges, was positive that Beckett, whose affairs he then managed, would beat me.

To say I was disappointed with my show would not be absolutely true, for Smith on this night boxed better than any English heavy-weight I have yet met. His defence was superb, and he made me miss very often. Still, I felt awkward; my sense of distance was but moderate, and I had a difficulty in punching like I did before the war. But I was in indifferent health and not properly trained, and when I knocked Smith out I was very tired and not a little apprehensive.

CHAPTER XI

ARRANGING THE BECKETT FIGHT

It had been arranged that I should fight Beckett early the following September, but a day before my affair with Smith I received orders from the military authorities to resume my duties at Joinville le Pont.

So Descamps, at my instigation, asked for the fight with Beckett to be postponed until I had been demobilized, and had had some weeks in which to train.

Mr. C. B. Cochran, under whose auspices the contest was to take place, was naturally distressed, and he pleaded with me to appear at Olympia in September as I had contracted to do. It would have been madness for me to have done so, and I insisted that if the fight could not be put back there would be no contest at all, for how could I, while under strict military orders, prepare for a fight upon which my whole future career depended? I knew, Beckett knew, everybody knew, that the result meant everything.

Certain English writers suggested that my plea for a postponement was that I feared Beckett, that

I did not like the job at all, and I could not understand. From my childhood days I have been up against hardness. Whatever position I hold has come to me only after years of unceasing work, after years of fighting, much of it of the severest kind. I have been thrashed as unmercifully as any pugilist in modern history, and the suggestion that I was a quitter caused me to decide that I would take my chances in September according to programme.

Descamps, however, threatened to part company with me if I did, for he said, "You will commit professional suicide. This Beckett is big and strong; he has never been kept out of the ring by the war. A better trained man there is nowhere."

But it took all the persuasion of Descamps for me to tell Mr. Cochran that I could not get ready to fight in September, and after a long conference in Paris he agreed to postpone it.

At the beginning of September I was free to return to civilian life, and after a short holiday at Dieppe I began training at La Guerche.

Then came an invitation to have a contest at San Sebastian, and on September 20 I met there one Croiselles. It was easy to beat him in two rounds. The King of Spain was present at the ringside, and offered to me his congratulations and good wishes.

Arranging the Beckett Fight

I began in real earnestness to prepare for Beckett with the coming of October. By now I was settled in my mind; training was not now an irksome business. I had witnessed the defeat of Wells by Beckett, but the Bombardier so clearly beat himself that I was not certain what manner of man the Englishman was.

Descamps, therefore, hit upon the idea of going to London to watch Beckett's fight with Goddard at Olympia. He returned much impressed, though he assured me that I should win in less than six rounds. And one evening I stole away from La Guerche to Paris in order to see Beckett spar with his brother George. And what I saw was most helpful. Back to La Guerche I went, and after McGoorty had lost to Beckett I invited him to come and assist me in my training.

He did not remain in my camp more than two or three days, and when he returned to England generous odds began to be bet on Beckett, which Descamps considered to be "good business," for, he said, "it was just what I wanted. The tale has gone forth that you are not the Carpentier of old. Which is as well that the people think so, for now do I bet much money."

And he did—with the result that after the fight he, together with my countrymen, returned to

France richer by many thousands of pounds. But it was really Descamps who first caused odds to be offered on Beckett. On the morning of my fight with Dick Smith, at the weighing in, which was done in the Bois de Boulogne, Descamps sought out Mr. Mortimer and offered to lay a level thousand pounds that I would beat Beckett. Said Mr. Mortimer, "There is plenty of time to speak about betting."

After the contest with Smith, Mr. Mortimer, who clearly showed that he was not at all impressed by my display, asked Descamps, "What about making a bet now?"

"Certainly," replied my manager. "I take six to four. I must have odds."

Mr. Mortimer did not bet, but from that moment Beckett was favourite. The wily Descamps had made him favourite, and when he took Charles Ledoux to London to meet the wonderful Driscoll he accepted from one English sportsman £1,000 to £800.

Into the reasons why McGoorty did not remain in my training camp for longer than a few days I will not enter, but I shall ever be grateful to him for coming to La Guerche, for in what little boxing I had with him I did not attach to his defeat by Beckett the significance I had previously done. I

would not have it that Beckett had accomplished something very wonderful.

My training at La Guerche was a genuine pleasure, and when I came to London on the night of November 6 I was trained to perfection; indeed, it would have suited me better if, instead of going to Stanmore for nearly a month, I had taken the ring two or three days after my arrival in London.

The wonderful reception given to me on the night of my coming to England made me wish for the fight to begin. My reception was almost like that accorded me when I came to do battle with Gunboat Smith. The English people I count as my best friends. They are the most sympathetic, the most appreciative people in the world. And they are the very embodiment of fair play. Their generosity is unbounded.

It is often said that the British are cold and austere, that they go through life with the curb on. As I have come to understand them, they are intensely emotional and wonderfully demonstrative, and if I were asked, I should say without the least hesitation that no boxer, no matter what his nationality is, so long as he plays fair and above-board, need desire a better playground than England, no better or truer friends than the English. From the very first day I appeared in

London I have known only kindness; there have been times when I have wished that I were of the English people, when, indeed, I have come to believe myself English.

I found Stanmore a delightful place. I loved to roam and run about its lanes; I was interested in the people, and in the boys of the famous Harrow School especially. On many days did boys from the school on the hill come to my training quarters and beg me to allow them to see me box.

They were great sportsmen, every one of them. They and others helped to shorten and brighten my days at Stanmore, but whilst there was a general conspiracy to make me happy there, I do not think when I have to do my fighting in London again that I shall finish my training in England. I had the greatest difficulty in adapting myself to what were entirely foreign conditions, and, worse, it was only the vigilance of Descamps that kept my gymnasium private. There were many occasions when even he failed to keep away the merely curious. A boxer, in order to acquire perfect physical fitness, must do his work behind closed doors; training in public is bad, it prevents complete concentration. With the public looking on one is apt to be restrained, and so it was that I insisted that none but my friends or those who come to me with

introductions should be allowed to crowd my gymnasium.

Beckett, you will remember, did his training in the public baths of Southampton, and, if he will pardon my saying so, I think he made a great mistake. I would say to all boxers that training should be essentially their own affair.

What I missed most at Stanmore was my dog, Flip, a black Chow, which had been my constant companion for years. We had become inseparable.

Such was my condition a month before the fight that I had not very heavy work to do at Stanmore. Arthur Townley, the Birkenhead sailor, offered to become one of my sparring partners, also Harry Reeve, the former light heavy-weight champion, but I decided to be helped by a young Englishman named Blumenfeld, a worthy and most promising boxer, and one with more than average intelligence. I was also assisted by Jules Lenaers, the middle-weight champion of Belgium.

Madame Vanebroucq, the mother-in-law of Descamps, gave a touch of homeliness to our camp, and Mr. Gus Wilson, a much-travelled man, was my masseur. We made a happy family, but there often burst upon us men and women who found their way to Stanmore because of their curiosity, and for one whole month I was constantly buttonholed

for my autograph. Daily hundreds of letters reached me, mostly from ladies, and accompanying many of them were mascots of all shapes and sizes. Without any exaggeration, before the fight I received at least a couple of hundred mascots, more than one offer of marriage, one offer of the use of a mansion in the neighbourhood of Park Lane during my stay in London, and tons of advice from all manner of people.

The weather while I was at Stanmore was most unfavourable for outdoor work, but there was not a single morning when I was not on the road, walking, running or skipping, with one or other of my sparring partners; but after the first ten days time hung heavily upon me, and I chafed and fretted under the monotony of it all. What I would have done had I not been able to visit the National Sporting Club on Monday nights and also look on boxing at the Holborn Stadium I do not know.

Still, all went well until the night before the fight, and then there came into my right arm an ugly swelling and much pain. Happily, my doctor had come from Paris, and by repeated application of hot poultices and massaging I woke the following morning to find that the swelling had been considerably reduced. Yet everybody in my camp was much

concerned. Descamps feared the worst, for he said, "It must be with your right hand that you knock Beckett out." We were successful in hiding my arm trouble, for the limb was painted, and the discoloration that had set in could scarce be noticed.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT FIGHT

I SHALL never forget leaving my hotel at Stanmore to drive to London for the great fight. My chauffeur, who had seen much war service and had been over the top at least half a dozen times—a stout fellow is he—was pale and trembling, and when I spoke to him he found it hard to reply.

"What is the matter?" I inquired.

"Nothing; but I do wish we were there. I have never felt so nervous before, and I would rather go over the top to-night than drive you to the Holborn Stadium."

I laughed right heartily, and then he steeled himself, jumped to the wheel, and we were off.

Not a word was spoken about the fight on the journey. It was almost a silent one, and I must confess that I was not altogether easy in my mind. I suffered a strange fluttering in my inside, and I was glad when I got to my dressing-room, there to lie down until it was time to dress.

I had stripped and was ready for the call to the ring, when there came into my room a middle-aged

gentleman whom I had never seen before. It was understood that I was to be left entirely alone, and his appearance was at once a puzzle and an annoyance. I was stretched on a couch, and by my side was M. Victor Breyer, the editor of the *Echo des Sports*.

The stranger shook hands, and in a muffled voice spoke so quickly that I did not comprehend what he said, and I begged M. Breyer to act as interpreter.

"This gentleman," said M. Breyer in his most courtly manner, "is the High Commissioner of the London Police. He has come on behalf of all the policemen of London to offer their greetings and hope that you will win."

"*Merci*, monsieur," I cried, as I shook him warmly by the hand; and the gentleman departed.

Now this is what the gentleman, who was a highly placed official in the police force, had come for and did say:

"It is my duty to tell you that you must take all consequences for the fight in which you are about to engage. If there is an accident you will have to answer for it. I have already cautioned Beckett."

M. Breyer, fearing that the possibility of an ugly happening might worry me, and realizing that the

police inspector didn't know a word of French, and also knowing that I had not in the least grasped the purpose of the gentleman's visit, turned the caution into an encouraging message of goodwill.

And I really believed that the London police were with me to a man, for M. Breyer gave no indication that he was playing a game of spoof. And when he left my room the police inspector was profuse in his thanks and said to M. Breyer, "I am very sorry that I cannot allow you a fee acting as my interpreter!"

Oh! how long it was before they were ready for Beckett and myself to fight. Every minute seemed an hour. I rocked and rolled on my couch. "How long yet?" I was for ever calling to the overwrought Descamps. Then at last.

I jumped to my feet, and as if by magic my nervousness left me. I felt as steady as a rock; I was certain that I would win, and as I was going out of my room I chucked the excited Descamps under the chin.

"*Très bien,*" he muttered, and in a trice I was making my way to the ring-side.

What a shout of welcome was I given! What a mighty crowd was present, and how the lights blinked and dazzled! I sprang into the ring, blew kisses to the people, and went to shake Beckett by

the hand. To the left of my corner sat the Prince of Wales, and as I bowed to him he returned a pleasant look of recognition. His handsome, boyish face, his keen, tense interest in all the preliminaries to the fight, his very presence at the ring-side made me happy.

I made myself thoroughly comfortable in my corner, and slowly put on the bandages the while I talked to Descamps. I purposely kept my eyes from Beckett, and yet I could see by the way he walked about, his aimlessness, the colour of his face, the queer look in his eyes, that he suffered much agitation.

"François," I whispered, "you have said that Beckett is a man of phlegm, that he is the complete opposite of the Bombardier. But look, he is all sensitiveness. He is not sure."

"Oh, oh," chuckled Descamps. "Two rounds, finis. Eh?"

And I had no doubt that he was right. I felt as if I were made of springs.

It took long before the signal was given for us to begin, for Mr. B. J. Angle, who refereed, first addressed the people about good sportsmanship and fair play.

Then, at last—clang!

I was out of my corner in a flash and on my toes.

Beckett advanced slowly, his chin tucked away in his great massive, mahogany-coloured shoulders; I imagined him to be flat-footed. He looked fierce and strong, but I saw a clear road for my left hand; it was an opening as wide as a field. And I forgot his bigness and all the stories I had read that he was a human sledge-hammer.

Ping! went my left with all the swiftness and straightness that I could give it, and I reached the nose. I felt his giant frame shake and quiver, and I thought I saw stars in his strange-looking eyes. He brushed his nose with the back of his glove and grunted and snorted. He then came for me, and I retreated so that my back almost touched the ropes.

Beckett, with right and left, sought to punch my body, but he mostly hit my elbows. Then he clinched.

"Break!" roared Mr. Angle, and making the most of my feet I worked round, and Beckett kind of shuffled towards me. He failed to upper-cut me with his left hand, for I bent my head back and caused him to miss by many inches.

When he was almost off his feet—he certainly had no perfect balance—I jabbed him very hard with my left hand twice in the face. He was sorely troubled; I could see that his brain was muzzy; that he had no

idea how to make a defence that was not easy to penetrate, and I there and then decided to try my right. I had a feeling that if Beckett got through the round he would recover steadiness, and by the immensity of his strength pull himself together.

I knew, too, that there was more than a possibility of my right arm, still very swollen and painful, giving out, and believing as I did that he had come near to being bewildered, I resolved to take a chance. There was his great square chin—to me, in the frame of mind I was, many chins rolled into one—unprotected and inviting a blow. Standing on my toes, pumping into myself the full force of the nervous energy within me, I crashed my right hand full on the point.

Down went Beckett, and as he was falling I upper-cut him with my left hand. Said I to myself, "If he can get up again he is the most wonderful man alive." For I do not think I ever hit anyone so hard and so surely in the right place as I did Joe Beckett.

When the blow landed I thought something had snapped. My whole heart, soul and body—everything—I put into that blow, and as I stood off I could not suppress a feeling of exhilaration. That which you call gloating did not take hold of me,

merely did I bubble with joy because I knew that I had accomplished that which I had set out to do; and, moreover, done that which nearly every English critic thought it impossible for me to achieve. In seventy-three seconds I had won, for although Beckett tried to rise, he could not do so, and he was counted out.

The moment "ten" had been called I helped him to his corner, and then I was shouldered round the ring, the packed building ringing with noise.

When I could struggle free from Descamps the Prince of Wales shook hands with me and said, "Yours is a splendid victory. I congratulate you heartily."

How wonderful it all was! That which was commonly agreed would be the hardest fight of my career had been the easiest; I won it in almost record time by obeying the first principles of boxing. There was no magic in my glove, neither did I employ a hypnotic eye. A straight left, a right, then a left, and it was all over.

It was very late when I was able to get to rest that night. For hours at my hotel I was engaged signing autograph books. Messages of congratulation came to me from all parts of the world. As I have said, many of my countrymen won several

thousands of pounds, and it was a particularly and pardonably merry party that returned to Paris, where after the reception of my life I appeared at the Alhambra for one week, and was paid £1,000 for my exposition with my good friend and sparring partner, Jules Lenaers.

CHAPTER XIII

PSYCHOLOGY AND BOXING

FROM my earliest days when preparing for a fight I have always striven to understand each of my opponents thoroughly. Mere physical qualities have never concerned me. The mind, the temperament, the outlook, the point of view of the man with whom I have been matched, I have endeavoured to study and to know. I would insist with every emphasis that boxing never did and never will depend upon sheer or brute strength. It is a science at once great and exacting. It is a game of skill, and as such it must be practised.

When I was free to resume fighting after five years in the Army I had first to make sure that I could hold my own against a man who was more of a boxer than a fighter; that is why, at a little conference with Descamps at La Guerche, Dick Smith came to be invited to take the ring against me. I knew this Englishman, and I felt that if I could beat him I would be sure that my long war service had not impaired my boxing. I had tested myself in every way to see whether I retained my punching power.

Before Smith was induced to come to France I already knew that in the near future an effort would be made to get me to London in a match against the best heavy-weight in Great Britain. At that time I only thought of Bombardier Wells. I was certain that in the opinion of the public at least he was the best of the British heavies; indeed, before I had actually contracted to fight Smith, there had come to La Guerche an agent of Mr. C. B. Cochran with an offer of £5,000 if I would sign articles to do battle with Wells, Beckett, or Frank Goddard.

"You will find," he assured me, "that your opponent will be the Bombardier. He is certain to beat the other fellows."

Beckett I had only read about; of Goddard I did not know anything, except that it was reputed that he was a man of granite. However, I readily accepted Mr. Cochran's offer.

As I have already stated, it was my great good fortune to get leave to travel to London to see Wells and Beckett. Before the fight I sought the Bombardier, and I was amazed to find him the very personification of confidence. "It will be us two for the European title," said Wells. And I believed he was right. This Wells told me an hour before he got into the ring. When he appeared he was the old Bombardier, the Bombardier he was at Ghent,

and later at the National Sporting Club—just a bundle of nerves. And when I saw his condition I left my seat, which was next to that of the Duc d'Orleans, and went to his corner to speak words of encouragement.

Because he saw Beckett scowling he seemed to lose his fighting senses. And so it was. How he was defeated is well known. But I was not awestricken by what Beckett had done. There was, of course, his obvious strength, his splendid ruggedness, and I knew that the knowledge that he had overthrown Wells would be of considerable moral worth to him; but I confess that I was more interested in Frank Goddard, to whom I was introduced on this night.

If ever a man was intended for the fighting game, I was certain Goddard was. His supreme confidence, his total lack of nerves, his grand, boyish swagger set me wondering.

"It will be Goddard who will be my opponent," I told Descamps.

"Big, very big, is this Goddard," said Descamps, as he pushed his fingers through his porcupine hair and made characteristic grimaces, "but because he is very big you will find more to hit. Now you will not be able to get to London to see Goddard and Beckett fight. You will be at your military school, worse luck, but I will be there, and I come back to

you not only with Beckett in my pocket, but if it is Goddard who wins, it will be Goddard."

And I returned to Paris.

Back to London went Descamps in his most serious and analytical frame of mind, to sit and watch the Beckett-Goddard contest. He returned to me and told me that Goddard, instead of fighting Beckett, stood stock still and regarded him as if he were no good. Beckett walked up to him and knocked him down. "So, you see, we cannot say whether Beckett is a champion or not; he has done nothing. But still, you must from this day get it fast in your head that he is the man you have to meet. First dismiss Smith, and then we will prepare for Beckett."

The postponement of the match with the British champion from September to December enabled Descamps to take another look at Beckett, and then after my demobilization I began to train as I never trained before.

This is how I began. First, Descamps made a class-room of the gymnasium, and in it he put me on a high stool, while he, stripped for fighting, endeavoured to give a life-like imitation of Beckett. Rare mobility of features helped him to assume the facial appearance of the champion; he bunched his arm and chest muscles, and then shouting "Time!"

he rose from his corner, his forehead puckered, his lips pouting, his head bent forward, his chin nestled in his shoulders, and went for an imaginary opponent, which by his manner I knew he wanted me to believe was myself. He swung right and left, and then, apeing myself, he stopped the Englishman with his left and brought the right over with a bang. Down went Descamps, now, of course, as Beckett, and I, assuming the position of referee, counted him out.

"Now," he said, "you have seen Beckett and Carpentier. You know what to do; you know what will happen."

I laughed unrestrainedly, but now, looking back, the pantomime done by Descamps was not only wonderfully clever, but there was in it remarkable prophecy.

On most days Descamps would give his representation, and he would always have it that I would win very quickly. He had arrived at this conclusion because he held that I was faster and had a better knowledge of how to employ the left hand. The effectiveness, the efficiency of the left hand I shall always preach.

But it was not because I was faster than Beckett that brought victory to me; it was the sure and methodical way in which I trained, and because of

the hours and the days I spent in seeking to understand him. In selecting my sparring partners, Descamps employed men who were as near as possible of the same shape and size as Beckett, and he laid it down that they must try to fight like Beckett would fight. And so, when I put the gloves on with them, I found it easy to believe that I was actually up against the English champion. For one whole month I worked hard and with enthusiasm, and the feeling that comes from physical fitness was delightful.

When the news first came to us that generous odds were being laid on Beckett, Descamps, the soul of thoroughness, caused a mutual friend to go to London and find out for what reason the Englishman was such a pronounced favourite, also to take all the odds offered. He returned to La Guerche with this story:

"In the city of London I found that the impression was that you were half a dead man. Here it was stated that you were consumptive; there that you were a drug-taker; again that you had no heart for further fighting; that you had merely entered into the contest to get hold of some money; that Beckett was held to be unbeatable."

It is a fact that an impression got abroad that I was a sick man. When I went to London to see

Beckett fight Wells, and was standing in the reception room of the Pavilion in Piccadilly, one gentleman associated with the newspapers, believing that I knew no English, said in a particularly loud and contemptuous voice, "What do you think of him? He looks as if he is dying; if they don't hurry up and put him in cotton-wool he will be after turning up his toes." And from these and other remarks I gathered that it was thought that I had been going the pace.

As for the Beckett party, I never knew more confident people; but there were times when they advertised and showed their confidence in a way that was foolish and not a little annoying.

After Beckett had sparred with his brother George in Paris, Descamps went to congratulate him and wish him well. Beckett looked at the little man and said, "You'll find that I am not the Bombardier." And by his manner he told pretty plainly that he was sure he would win without any great trouble.

The idea I have formed of Beckett is this. He puts strength before skill. I have a notion that the knowledge that he can hit hard, that he is big and strong gives him his greatest joy, and fills him with certainty that he could beat me or any other man. But what brought his failure in his match with me

more than anything else was that, instead of regarding our contest as a game of skill, he made it a personal matter, a thing of enmity.

Now, a fighter who is for ever gloating over his immense strength, and is determined to hurt the other fellow, forgets the very purpose of boxing, and, worse, he loses all sweetness of temper. A professional pugilist can never be an exotic; he must be hard, unrelenting, merciless if you like, but only in the way of bringing his skill into full play. Contempt for a man less than yourself is fatal.

Never during the whole of my career have I felt ill-disposed towards an opponent. I regard the man I fight as a professional man, not as a man to pummel. There is not vice; there can be no vice in fighting. What is held to be viciousness in a pugilist is but thoroughness, and there is no sane logical reason why men after hammering one another in the ring should not be the best of friends.

Take Bombardier Wells. If ever a man ruined another man's fighting career, I did that of Wells; but we are the best of friends. When he fought Beckett I was pro-Wells; I shouted for him; every punch he received hurt me more than it hurt him; his defeat made me sad, and yet if I had had to defend my title against the Bombardier I should not have spared him.

Let me tell a little story about Wells. When we had signed articles to meet at the National Sporting Club we were photographed together, and later we discussed our chances. Said Wells, "I will not treat you so kindly as I did at Ghent. Give me the same chances again, and I will knock you out."

"But why didn't you? You were too kind," I replied.

"That's it, Georges, but never again. You will lose your head next time. I will knock it off."

"That's right, Billy," I rejoined, and we both gave ourselves over to laughter.

What happened in our second match is ancient history, but Wells, because he lost and was derided and made to feel ashamed, did not lessen his friendship for me. Some of my best friends are men I have beaten and thrashed in the ring, and there are men who have beaten me for whom I have the highest regard. And why should it not be so?

For some reason Beckett and his manager regarded me with lofty indifference. Beckett was sure that he would beat me, and yet he had never troubled to shape ways and means. So far as I was able to ascertain, Beckett's confidence that he would knock me out came from the fact that he found it easy in his preparation at Southampton to knock out each and every one of his sparring partners, and to

finish long days of hard work without being in the least fatigued.

It was daily recorded by those who watched him that his strength was prodigious; never once in all the criticisms of his training did I find mention of his skill.

"Good, hard, rugged, brusque, John Bull Beckett," I could only learn he was, and so while he was performing wonders in his gymnasium I gave myself over to study, and with the help of Descamps, who read Beckett as I did, I attuned my mind for an encounter with such a man as I determined that he was.

But first, and almost immediately after my arrival in London, I decided to take myself to the Holborn Stadium and become thoroughly familiar with the ring, the lights, and the general atmosphere of the place.

On the first Saturday I was at Stanmore I received an invitation from Mr. Leslie Knighton, the manager of the Arsenal Football Club, to witness his team's match with Bolton Wanderers. I was pleased to accept it, for not only did my visit to the ground at Highbury serve to introduce to me a typical English football crowd, but it gave me my first experience of a match between professionals of the highest degree.

On our way back from Highbury we looked into

the Holborn Stadium, where Descamps got into the ring and took its exact size. Arriving back at Stanmore, Descamps had a ring fixed up that was of precisely the same dimensions as that at the Holborn Stadium, and so with Lenaers, Blumenfeld, and later the French heavy-weight, Marthuin, all affecting the style of Beckett, it was not difficult for me to suppose that on every day I boxed at Stanmore I was up against the English champion at the Holborn Stadium.

I have explained that my hardest work by way of preparation was done at La Guerche before I came to London, and it is a fact that all the time I was at Stanmore I was in a position to afford to take things leisurely. I only worked every other day, and on several occasions I trained in private at the Holborn Stadium. The work I did there was most helpful. I became completely familiarized with the conditions under which the fight would take place. There was not a single thing that I left to chance, and except for my swollen arm no man could have been fitter than I was.

It has ever been the rule of Descamps to spare no expense on training. Money is of no account. And training is quite as great a science as boxing. First, every possible care should be taken that it does not become monotonous, and always the boxer

CARPENTIER AT SEVENTEEN

CARPENTIER TO-DAY

must understand that it is done for a specific purpose; that every little thing you do is full of meaning. Make your gymnasium your school or university, and never go into training unless your mind is easy and you are entirely happy in yourself. Fashion a time-table, and stick to it. When you are at work, work hard and with enthusiasm.

Sometimes I think there is a tendency to make training deadly mechanical; it is just one round of the same old thing; variety is not striven for, and so there is always a danger of staleness. No two men should be prepared in the same way, and it should not be soulless; every effort should be made to have a training camp a family affair.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW I TRAINED TO MEET BECKETT

THIS is the way in which I trained for my contest with Beckett. First, Descamps and myself exchanged views as to the type of man Beckett was. We assumed that he was justly entitled to claim to be the best heavy-weight in Great Britain; we readily admitted that he was strong, but we doubted whether there was uncommon elasticity in his limbs. That he was a stone, and perhaps more, heavier than myself was of no great concern, though it meant that I should be obliged to shoulder a considerable handicap in the matter of poundage, but this we decided would be lessened by my greater speed. And what encouraged us most was the certainty we had that Beckett was more remarkable for strength than high boxing intelligence.

Descamps finished this, our council of war, by declaring, "If you are to win, you must seek to prove that mind can triumph over matter. If speed, skill, quick thinking be of little or no account; if, indeed, these qualities do not mean everything, then, Georges, the sooner we have done with boxing the

better. It is not sport. But I will always have it that the accomplished boxer is preferable to an avowed fighter. So far as I can make out, not one responsible English critic has said that Beckett is more than an average boxer; but they see in him a wonderful fighter. What is said about him, however, need not trouble us; it is our business to rate him as the best ever. And now from this night you give yourself over to me."

As soon as daybreak I was on the roads of La Guerche. I do my road work according to the mood in which I happen to be at the moment. A companion I must always have. I might walk for many miles; perhaps I begin by racing my dogs, or skip, or sprint, or shadow-box. Whatever it be that I do, it is done to give me pleasure.

The weather was hard and cold at La Guerche; on many days the roads were coated with snow, but whatever the weather I insisted that when I was not in the gymnasium I should be out of doors. There is a tendency on the part of some boxers to allow themselves to be coddled; they are almost afraid of the fresh air. When I am preparing for a fight in the summer, most of my work I do in the open. After two hours' walking, running, skipping and shadow-boxing, I return to the house of Descamps and breakfast—a mug of cocoa, and milk got from

one of Descamps' cows, and rolls; and until luncheon I do anything the mood I am in dictates.

Sparring, sometimes done after the fashion of real fighting, gymnastics, acrobatics, and physical exercises generally take up a great part of the afternoon. From the moment I enter the gymnasium I never stop until I have completed my programme. I do not permit myself to take a single "breather."

I do my training upon a system which is a combination of systems. This and that I have embraced; this and that I have scrapped, so that I have built out of the many and varied notions of how best to gain physical perfection what I consider to be a science. The exercises which I do are the outcome of close study over many years.

All exercises that are merely violent I put at one side, for that which is difficult and hard to do hurts, and is injurious. For instance, prolonged swinging of Indian clubs and dumb-bells, or what we know as muscle-making exercises, I do not approve of. I would not pass a man "all muscle" as the perfect or ideally trained athlete. The severely muscular man is only strong in a given, a set, test of strength; he may lift a prodigious dead weight, and it may be that he cuts an engaging and imposing figure, but he is without elasticity, quick-

footedness; frequently he has no perfect carriage; he has made no special study of deportment.

As one who is a fighting man by choice and profession, it may appear strange when I say that I attach every importance to correct walking. I would put down deportment as the foundation, the root of physical culture.

Having learned to walk correctly, the desire for full physical proficiency becomes tremendous, for you have then mastered one of the difficult lessons of your athletic curriculum; then it is that you know all about poise, balance; you have shed all awkwardness.

A diffidence to engage in physical culture comes from a belief that it means hard work. I readily concede that training as training is appalling in its monotony; it is a thing without a soul. If a boy or man goes into training without first appreciating the true inwardness of every little thing he is called upon to do, and does, then he will reap no considerable benefit. Whilst the practice of physical culture entails much self-denial, experience has convinced me that it is not necessary to eschew all natural likings.

When after luncheon one day at Stanmore I smoked a cigarette with my coffee, one of my visitors, obviously surprised, remarked, "I have never known a fighting man to smoke when in training."

Clearly he belonged to the school of hard-and-fast principles. I call it the unnatural, as well as out-of-date, school. I smoke a cigarette because I find it comforting; it helps me to know that although a fighter in strict training, I may be my ordinary self. In training the grand principle should be moderation in all things. Blind, obstinate abstention from this and that is as harmful as over-indulgence.

And I would say that it is entirely wrong to have dinned into the ear of a pugilist that he is a fighting machine to be wound up and set working at will.

When I was given permission by the Army authorities to leave the school at Joinville le Pont to train for my contest with Dick Smith, the first thing I attempted was to learn to walk naturally again, and not after the ideas of a drill sergeant. And immediately I found I could walk in a proper, human, unwooden way I took to skipping and running on the roads, not with any idea of seeing what distance and how quickly I could run, but so as to develop and strengthen my breathing organs, and, most important of all, to acquire springiness of limb, to create the feeling that suggests you are treading on air.

If you would be entirely happy, seek to obtain that rare feeling; it is indescribably beautiful. Before

I began to spar again for the first time for five years I spent my days roaming and running about the country woods. I had for my companions sweet-singing birds; I came to know all the cattle and horses round about the countryside; I hunted, and went shooting and fishing. I made myself suppose that the beginning of my training was a holiday, so that I was happy when I took up the boxing-gloves. I was sure that I had begun to build up fighting fitness upon sound and rational principles.

Those who would box well and with success must enjoy every minute of their training; they must never feel that it is irksome. Let us begin with road-work. Do not go rushing and tearing along. First walk, then run, again do shadow-boxing; skip; if you have a companion, play leap-frog, or jump a gate; at intervals swing your arms and legs; try to give your limbs every suppleness. And when you return from the road and there is skipping to be done, make it a thing fantastic; try to do the double shuffle the while you twist and twirl and skip over the rope.

You will cause those who look on to smile, and you yourself will smile. Make skipping a healthy romp, and when you spar keep in your mind's eye the type of fellow your prospective opponent is. Set your jaws tight, keep your eye steady, insist your

trainer behaves as if you were actually fighting. Imagine that you have your man with his back to the ropes; punch so that you feel that you are winning; wriggle out of imaginary trouble. Try and think that the fight is going against you, and then set your brain working so as to turn the contest in your favour; always be severe—the merciless, relentless, uncompromising man in your shadow-boxing; do not make it mere feinting, dodging or waltzing around. And when you stretch yourself on the floor of your gymnasium and bring yourself into a sitting position and then touch your toes, do not do this mechanically—splash it all over with novelty and variety.

There is one exercise that I would specially commend. Lie on your back, and, having made your body rigid, bring your legs up slowly and touch the floor at the back of your head with your toes, then let the legs revert to their original position, leaving them stiff, and bring your body up and strike an upright pose; then bend as if you would touch your toes with your fingers, but instead stand on your hands for a second or two before resuming a lying position on your back.

If you do this you will strengthen every muscle you are called upon to employ when fighting. It may be that this particular exercise smacks of

acrobatics, but once you have mastered it you will like it immensely, for it is splendidly interesting.

I affected this particular exercise or " stunt " after first seeing Joe Jeannette at work in Paris. Few men trained like this negro. It has been repeatedly asserted that his greatness came from his extraordinary stamina and capacity to take punishment. But this is only partially true. Jeannette fell little below a world's champion—indeed, had the opportunity been given to him by his brother black, Johnson, the probability is that he would have taken the title, because he fitted himself for fighting by bringing all his intelligence to bear on his training.

It was more than a year before I fought him when I obtained permission to see him in his gymnasium. At that time there was no thought that I would ever meet him. The methods pursued by Jeannette in training were a revelation to me. For hours he would work silently. He was like some black panther; he made me go hot and cold when I first saw him, for at the moment I walked into his gymnasium he was walking on his hands. At the conclusion of his work he saw that I was thinking and dreaming about it all, and in a quiet, soft way he had he came to me and said, " You cannot understand why I think it necessary and helpful to walk on my hands. Wal, my boy, I will tell you. By

turning yourself upside down you so employ and test your brain centres that when you are hit on the jaw your head is less likely to go spinning round. No man alive can keep his feet if he is hit properly and heavily on the point; but if you follow this particular exercise, which means that I shoot my feet in the air and walk around on my hands, you become less susceptible to that kind of drunken helplessness which is induced by a clip on the jaw."

Jeannette was no student of physiology in the everyday understanding of the term, and yet of all fighters, white or black, I do not remember having met one who broke more completely away from training methods of a stereotyped kind, nor one who showed greater intelligence in the practice of physical culture.

History will perhaps have it that Jeannette was only a bruiser; he was more. He was a man with ideas, and in his way a scientist, and the antithesis of the negro as popularly understood.

And how very unlike Jack Johnson, who was a combination of sorts—a humorist, cynic, immensely clever, but inordinately vain! Johnson demanded that when he went abroad the lights should be full on him. Jeannette was a great, big, honest fellow. Johnson liked to prattle and employ a vocabulary that was almost entirely a jumble of words. He

affected an intense liking for Herbert Spencer, the banjo, dancing, diamonds, and high-powered cars; yet there were moments when he posed as a model of modesty.

Jeannette when in France kept clear of the boulevards; Johnson strutted along them peacock fashion. Jeannette was all for the quiet of his home, and, though black, he was one of the most likeable Americans who ever came to Paris, and I shall ever be indebted to him for his introduction to training exercises that have been most helpful to me.

To win a high position in pugilism a man, whether a fight is pending or not, must always be in training, mentally and physically. As the conjurer, the acrobat, the juggler—as, indeed, like every public performer—he must be always searching for new ideas. To attempt something new is the surest way of keeping fresh, both in mind and body, and escaping a seizure of that most harmful and heart-destroying thing called staleness.

I have always been opposed to what is still a common practice of a boxer being taken clean away from an ordinary life when he begins to train for a fight. It is more often than not assumed that a boxer, so as to be "prepared," must be taken away to some outlandish place, away from all friends and acquaintances, so as to be free to think of fight, fight,

fight from morning till night. It is not supposed that he is competent to think and decide for himself; he is not allowed to do so. He is put to bed; he is wakened up; he has no choice of food, and he is physicked and pampered. I have been in some training camps where fresh air, I have suspected, is not wanted—windows sealed, doors shut tight, and altogether a premium put on an unnatural mode of existence.

Every boxer should have more than an elementary knowledge of hygiene; no boxer should be made a prisoner when in training; no boxer should be called upon to spend his days with gloves, dumb-bells and sparring partners as his sole companions. Training should be regarded not as something extraordinary, but as an everyday business. And it should be done to schedule. There must be method; a time for everything.

Let me tell of a little incident that occurred at Stanmore. One evening I had just completed a game of auction bridge with some friends who had come from Paris. The cards were being shuffled for another hand.

"I am afraid you must leave me out," I said, "for I have not time for any more cards to-night."

"Why?" I was asked. "It is only ten o'clock; surely your work is done for to-day."

"Oh, no," I replied. "At ten o'clock I go to my masseur for hand treatment."

"But cannot you go at ten-thirty?" one of my friends inquired. "Half an hour will make no difference."

"Oh, yes, it will," I ventured. "I have my time-table, and I must go."

I mention this by way of showing that I attach every importance to system and method. Had I kept my masseur waiting for me he, very rightly, would have considered me to be indifferent, and he, being but human, would also have become indifferent; and if indifference or carelessness creeps into your training, then your training ceases to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

And, next to system and method, I attach the utmost importance to the life of a boxer when in training being humanized. It must also have domesticity in it; if it has not, then it is drab, of an ugly colour. The fact that Descamps has his own training establishment—in other words, a house big enough to take into it a gymnasium, and has attached to it playing fields—makes it easy for me to have homeliness given to my training.

My trainer, sparring partners, masseur, every single person employed to help me, are as members of one family, with François Descamps as father,

and, since he has suffered the loss of his young wife, his mother-in-law as "grandma."

The two children of Descamps have also their place at the table. Such is my training life at La Guerche, that all those associated with me are not only my friends, but each one regards the fight that is pending as his own particular and intimate concern. For instance, "grandma" will prophesy, "Oh, yes, we will win all right." The five-year-old Descamps, in his baby way, will declare that there will be such and such a happening; the domestics are co-opted members of the staff; each single person in the household is in training, so to speak.

"And how do you feel this morning, Henry?" I asked of Descamps' cowman, the morning before we left La Guerche for London.

"Superb," he replied. "We shall beat Beckett all right." And in a completely satisfied and sanguine way went on milking.

I would that every boxer was able to do his training as I do. My evenings are made supremely happy. When I have finished my day's work I will go to the Café de l'Union, and maybe for a couple of hours I will live with the young men of La Guerche. Until I went among them they had never seen a fighter, and they have but a hazy notion of what fighting is. At the Café de l'Union I am not Georges Carpentier,

the pugilist, but just a young man who follows an unusual trade. And, since they have but a crude knowledge of the ring, they never air their views about it, and, perhaps without their knowing, they give me that distraction which it is necessary for every man to have at the end of a day's work.

On a billiard table delightfully agricultural and one which is remarkable for bumps and general debility, great and exciting games are played. That the lamps give off feeble light, that the cue is worn, that chalk is at a premium, that the cushions of the table were robbed of their springiness in the long ago, that it is necessary to peer through a cloud of tobacco smoke, matters nothing.

And after billiards, dice; perhaps in a corner of the one room of which the estaminet is composed young men will sing as they play cards. At the Café de l'Union, at the end of my training day, I will forget for two long glorious hours all about fighting. I am of a hearty, simple folk, and when I, with my dog Flip—he happy because by all manner of tricks he has entertained the locals—return to join Descamps and family at dinner, I am as any other man; I have not the consciousness that I fight for my living.

Dinner over, "grandma" with mock formality will announce that coffee is served in the drawing-

room, and with equal mock formality Descamps will lead the way.

This is a typical evening at Descamps' house on my training camp.

A log fire burns and dances merrily. In front of it is stretched my dog Flip, so that he serves as a pillow to one of the half-sleeping children. "Grandma" is either knitting or mending. Descamps is fussing and talking the while he dispenses coffee, and one or other of us will sit humming some catchy topical song. Descamps plays the rôle of harmonizer-in-chief, and, affecting the manner of a choirmaster, insists that everyone shall join in.

Simple melodies of my country are favoured, but I being "professor in English," will be called upon for "If you could only care," or some such popular ditty, with Descamps struggling manfully as my partner. The *pièce de résistance* is always a violin solo by a friend, now manager of Descamps' factory, who was once a member of the orchestra at the Paris Opera House.

And there you have me—a pugilist at home. Will you not believe me when I say that my training days are happy—that there is much sunshine in them? When nights seemed indescribably long at Stanmore I was sorry that I had left La Guerche so many weeks before the fight with Beckett. But so as to escape

complete strangeness I took "Grandma" with me, and she with Descamps endeavoured to make our little room at Stanmore as much like the drawing-room at La Guerche as possible. In it we had our family evenings; we sang and played and told stories that had not to do with fighting. Descamps drew liberally upon his repertoire, and we took a delight in teaching Blumenfeld, the English boxer, our favourite French song.

This Blumenfeld, a tall, red-cheeked youth, entered into the spirit of our night entertainments with gusto, and he confessed that he never imagined it were possible to make training so pleasant.

The dressing-room of a fighter before and after a contest is a world of its own. I often think mine is entirely strange and remarkable. Before I take the ring there is only one man that counts; it is Descamps. Woe betide anyone who talks and asks stupid, inane questions; terrible would be his lot were he to speculate on my chances. Mine is a dressing-room crowded with dumb people. Everything is done by signs; how different when the fighting is over!

It was different after my victory over Beckett. Descamps began by giving an imitation of how he believed Dempsey would fight, for the benefit of Lenaers, and in his striving after colour and effect

he landed so heavily with his right that the good Lenaers was almost knocked out. Wilson, my masseur, pulled furiously at a cigarette; everybody shouted, and everybody thought it proper to hit and slap and caress me.

"Now for Dempsey!" yelled Descamps, and the while I smiled at the little man he was hammering at an imaginary Dempsey with all his might. Needless to say, Descamps was the winner, but he had not won before there trooped into my room many Englishmen I had at some time or other beaten. All my good friends and well-wishers.

Bombardier Wells came to me with his long stride.

"Georges," he said, "I knew you would beat him." And really, Wells, so warm and sincere was he in his congratulations, that it was hard for me to believe that he was not of my country.

Until very early morning it was difficult for me to realize that my fight with Beckett was over. When I retired to bed sleep would not come to me. I could only twitch and roll and toss. As soon as daylight came my masseur, who had not been to bed, came and for two hours read to me what the newspapers had to say. Messages of congratulation, presents, invitations to dinner came to me by the hundred. My breakfast took the form of a public reception; I

was mobbed, I was stormed, and I was pleased to steal away in my car from the hotel in London to Stanmore, where, together with a few friends, I celebrated my triumph.

"Grandma" told a story of how, when she waited for the result at one of the theatres, the message came that I had lost, that she refused to believe it. "But," she added, "my boy, the experience was terrible, and it is only now that I have got you in my arms and hear you tell me that you have won that I know you have won."

I have already stated that I do not bet; I have never backed myself in any one of my fights. Everything that has to do with money I leave to Descamps. Money, as money, I care little about. It is Descamps who has made me rich; he will squeeze every penny out of my engagements, and he does all my banking.

Within a few days after my victory over Beckett, Descamps had quite a long list of engagements for me. Following my appearance at the Alhambra, Paris, for which, as I have stated, I was paid at the rate of £1,000 per week, I returned to London, gave an exhibition at the Albert Hall, left two days later for Liége, then on to Bordeaux, where I knocked out the American, "Blink" McClosky, in the second round. Later, I sparred at the Free Trade

Hall, Manchester, and then on to Northern France. Subsequently I appeared in the south-western part of my country, taking in Limoges and Perigueux, and, returning to Belgium, I visited Brussels, Ghent, Charleroi, Antwerp and Ostend. After a short rest at La Guerche, I went to Monte Carlo, where I met the Belgian heavy-weight, Grundhoven.

A tour in Italy followed, and, *en passant*, I would mention that to my fight with Joe Beckett a member of the sporting staff of one of the Rome newspapers, one Signor Orlandini, was specially sent, and he assured me that in the near future the youth of Italy will take a high place among the boxing nations of the world.

I appeared at Milan, Rome and Genoa. My tour was a very delightful one as it was instructive.

I doubt whether many modern boxers have had greater opportunities of studying Continental boxing. I have no obsessions, I write without prejudice, and when I say that the strength, the possibilities, and the whole future of boxing on the Continent are most encouraging, I say that which is undeniably true.

When I had the honour of fighting Croiselles before the King of Spain in September, 1914, I formed the impression that when boxing is well and seriously and properly organized it will enjoy the

utmost popularity. When I met Croiselles, whom I defeated at San Sebastian in two rounds, the majority of those who looked on could not, I felt, understand how a man, with only his fists and by speed of foot and subtlety of mind, could have the audacity or expect to beat another.

Toreadors, matadors, and men to whom bull-fighting is the spice of life came to take a peep at me. By their manner they would have me believe that they rather pitied me; but when it was all over and I had beaten Croiselles, a bigger man than myself, they were most prodigal in their praises, and would have started a boxing lesson there and then.

I would advise any "old-timer" who has the ability to teach to go out to Spain. He will find that country easy ground to till, and will reap a bountiful harvest. For Spain—at least, the people I met at San Sebastian—has been smitten by boxing.

It will be agreed, I am sure, after recent happenings—Basham, Wilde and Marriott are the only three British champions who have not been beaten by one or other of my countrymen—that boxing in France is of considerable account. During the war and since peace came again there are few French boys who do not seek to box. Given proper instruction, we shall have any number of great boxers. But in

England, so in France, in every country, there should be established a national school of boxing.

After the defeat of Jim Driscoll by Charles Ledoux, Descamps had a long and earnest talk with Mr. A. F. Bettinson about the foundation of a boxing academy in London, and he agreed that if Driscoll—the greatest English boxer Descamps declares he has ever seen—were put in charge a most necessary work would be done.

CHAPTER XV

THE FUTURE OF BOXING : TRAINING HINTS AND SECRETS

I LOOK, all Frenchmen look, to the National Sporting Club of England, which is surely the home of all boxing, to create the first boxing academy. In Driscoll England has the perfect, the ideal boxing master.

When I was in the Army I heard many stories of his greatness as a teacher. It was Driscoll, by his unexampled cleverness against Ledoux, who suggested a national school of boxing; but surely the time arrived long ago when the question of harnessing the ability of old champions the world over to some practical purpose invited consideration.

I have also thought of Billy Wells in this connection. In him you have a rare stylist; and a boxer must have style. If he is temperamentally unfitted to win a place among the world's fighters, surely Wells could and should be employed to teach the young men of his country. Wells, whether he makes good in the ring or not, should not be allowed to drop out. There is no tragedy so poignant as a man who, before he bumped against failure, was petted

and fussed over, and who in the early winter of his life had to jog along anyhow.

From time to time there have come to France in the capacity of seconds Britishers whose names are written in some of the brightest pages of boxing history; yet a short-memoried and unimaginative public, now that their fighting days are over, would count them among hangers-on. My heart has ached and bled when I have known that for a handful of francs it were possible to have them as your valet.

The establishment of boxing academies throughout the world is of paramount importance. We often hear of the "natural fighter," but the "natural fighter" is not one who has not been taught how to box and fight. Since my return to civil life I have been astonished at the number of young men fighting for a living, who have but an elementary notion of what boxing is and how to box. That they have a natural aptitude and liking for boxing was obvious, but they knew little about what is called the science of the game. The result is that all too often that which passes for boxing is little better than ugly mauling. Wrestling, clinching and hugging and holding come from a lack of knowing of what boxing is.

A well-regulated boxing school would eradicate all these and every unpleasant feature which has

crept into the game. In my humble way I have preached the need for approved and accepted boxing teachers in France, and in Paris, at all events, young men may practise the "noble art" at many private academies. And in this respect I think France is better off than England, and that in my judgment is why you have witnessed the glorious march of the French boxers to fame.

You do not count efficient French boxers on one hand as you used to do; they are splendidly numerous, and I think it will be conceded that as a whole they are not lacking in style, that they have been well taught.

Perhaps not a few of them are too much inclined to ape the ways of the "American school." But I am not with those who profess to see no virtue in the typical American way of boxing and fighting. I would not say that Gunboat Smith or Frank Moran, for instance, were typical American fighters; neither had any style at all; each appealed to me as a stout-hearted fellow who just fought. I will always have it that Harry Lewis affected the true American style. He so fashioned his ways that he embraced all the best that is in English boxing, and by constant practice, by diligence and high intelligence, gave to it much of his own personal character. What is called "the American style" does not in a

strictly literal sense exist. You will say, "So-and-So is a two-handed fighter; he fights like an American."

I am still a young man, but I am old in boxing, and I have come to the conclusion that the reason why England has not the large number of boxers as in former years is because her young men attempt to do that which they hold to be the secret of the success of the Americans. There is only one way to box: you must have a good attack, a sound defence, and you can have neither if you first do not learn how to stand, how to hit, and how to avoid trouble. There are some young men who by their ways suggest that they believe that if they crouch and swing their arms they are bound to succeed.

People have said that I crouch. I don't—not in the sense that I double myself up. I am for ever on my toes and ready to spring.

What I believe to be one of the greatest weaknesses of young boxers is that they think too much of what they call in-fighting, which, as they do it, is not in-fighting at all, but a combination of all sorts—clinching, holding, and wrestling—anything but boxing.

Take Jim Driscoll. To my thinking he was the acme of boxing perfection. The attitude which he strikes is an ideal one. When he lost against Ledoux

it was said that the boxer had gone down before a fighter. Which was absurd. Driscoll was a wonderful boxer, but he was also a wonderful fighter. He did not bash and slap, and give to his arms the appearance of a windmill. But in every phase of the fighting he was a wonder, and was just as much of a fighter as Ledoux. Driscoll lost to Ledoux because he was old. It was predicted that I would lose to Beckett because I was only a boxer and he was a fighter.

My advice to all young men who would box with success is to cut out of their lessons any weakness they might have for imitating the peculiarities of any particular champion. Because it happens that A is a croucher and has won fame, they should not imagine that the first lesson for them to learn is how to crouch. Take the bed-rock principles of boxing —they are the same the world over—and when you have mastered them and you feel more at home if you crouch, or affect this and that mannerism, why, by all means do so.

Two of the greatest essentials if boxing is to be good are systematic teaching and the establishment of some school of referees. We in France, especially, are not rich in referees, and I gathered during my short stay in London that England, too, might be better equipped. It has long appeared strange to

me that referees are not appointed by some recognized boxing body. I do not say this because I have lost matches which I felt I won; I would make no complaint; indeed, my experience on the whole has been most fortunate. But there are times when vanity, and not experience, is the only explanation why some gentlemen, perfectly honest and well-intentioned gentlemen I would hasten to say, take the position of referee.

The referee I would have as much a professional man as the boxers themselves. It should be their first business; they should be schooled in the duties they are called upon to perform at a regular and properly constituted place of instruction.

It does not follow that a man who has lived in boxing all his life makes the best referee; neither does it follow that an old-time boxer is suited for the position. I could not, for instance, picture Descamps as the ideal referee; he has not the judicial temperament; and really the ability to referee very largely comes from temperament and long practice. Whether the referee should judge a contest from inside the ring or from a position outside is merely a matter of personal taste. Nearly everything depends upon the type and temper of the fighters engaged.

If men obeyed the rules of the game, it is most decidedly not necessary to have the referee always on the top of them.

Now, in France we have a gentleman known as the "Directeur du Combat." He is not the referee, the time-keeper, or anything but a gentleman on the spot to see that there is no contravention of the rules. The Directeur du Combat can, and often does, serve a useful purpose, but there are times when he will come near to ruining a fight by his consciousness of his own importance. He can, in fact, be a source of considerable annoyance to the boxers, for he will butt in when he is not wanted; he will tear the boxers apart when they are doing nothing more than in-fight, and I am afraid there have been occasions when he has upset the equilibrium of English fighters. I hope the day will come when it will not be necessary to employ him.

Personally, until a higher standard of refereeing is set up, I favour two judges and a referee, as in the Amateur Boxing Championships. It is a great thing to ask a man to be the sole arbiter of a contest in which a considerable fortune and the whole reputation of two men are at stake.

As to the general atmosphere of boxing, I prefer the way contests are conducted in England, especially

at the National Sporting Club. English boxing, when I have seen it, has been a model of decorum. It has been done without noise. Not so in France. This, perhaps, because the majority of those who go to it are but young and over-enthusiastic.

CHAPTER XVI

A CHAPTER ON FRANÇOIS DESCAMPS

I WAS twelve years of age when I decided, with the full and complete approval of my parents, that it was time to leave school and set out to swell the family exchequer. School, as school, did not appeal to me; it lost all its charms, if it ever had any, the first day I met Descamps and was free to have the run of his gymnasium.

In François I found the first human man I had met, also the strongest. It has been written, much to my amusement, that I beat Beckett because I hypnotized him, because I had put it on record that once upon a time I was sent into a trance by Descamps; that I had suggested I dabbled in "black magic"; that I had the "Indian sign." It is, of course, absurd to suppose that I defeated Beckett in any other way but by a punch on the point; but when I was a tiny toddler Descamps, at our first meeting, did kind of hypnotize me, for I could but stare at him. There was not a man in all our province that was in any way like him—that I decided at once.

Poor he was, like myself; his home, his gym-

nasium, was no palace—mean, ramshackle—but if he had more sous than francs, he had the grand manner. It were possible for him, dressed though he then was, to be courtly and formal. He was no poseur, and yet he carried himself like no other man whose home was built on the coalfields of Northern France. It is often said that we are totally dissimilar; that he, because of his volubility, his excitability, his gesticulations, is a typical Frenchman; that I, because of my pale, bloodless, sunken cheeks and cold, calculating ways, am no Frenchman. Which is very true, but our very dissimilarity it is that has caused us to be inseparable. Always has he fascinated me.

When I first went to him, Descamps was everything rolled into one. He was a master of Swedish drill; he was the first man to introduce English boxing in the part of France to which I belong, yet he was a clever exponent of Le Savate.

In our poor, dreaming days he was an accomplished cyclist; his machine, a high ordinary of a particularly antique make; and he was a gymnast of much ability. And away from his gymnasium he was a socialist of an uncompromising kind, a revolutionary, an anarchist. Which reminds me!

One day he was sipping coffee outside a café in

Montmartre when he was hailed by an acquaintance of long ago.

"Bon jour, François. You look mighty prosperous; what about the 'Red Flag' now? No anarchy for you, eh?" was the greeting of his former friend.

"No," snapped Descamps, his merry eyes twinkling. "I am no anarchist now. I am a capitalist."

But I remember the time when days were lean and life meant scraping and scratching for an existence, when much bitterness would come into his soul. He was a very ill-paid "Professor," and yet when we had not a sou between us he appeared to be happiest, for then he would take me on his knee and picture a future that was all brightness. Then, when his pockets were empty, he would ape the ways of a peacock; he was immensely proud.

I shall never forget the day when I was discharged from my first situation, which brought me a salary of fifteen francs a month. I was dismissed because whilst on an errand I fell into the canal with the rickety bicycle which my employer provided. I was sore distressed and feared ructions at home.

"You need not trouble your head about work again," said Descamps, "for on this very day I have arranged that you take part in the Northern

Savate Championships, which are to be held at Bethune."

Savate, as is known, is a game of kicking, and it is one that demands much skill in those who would practise it.

Although Descamps, when he set me up as his "famous pupil," had but one intention, and that was to make a boxer of me, he insisted that I should improve my knowledge of savate. Already, like most of the boys of the neighbourhood, I had taken to this form of "fighting," and under Descamps I quickly added to my store of tricks.

The prospect of making my debut before the public was, as you may suppose, great—exciting—memorable. It was decided that my parents should know nothing about my contemplated "fight" at Bethune, and literally I was spirited away by Descamps.

These days we travel in semi-state; then, a modest railway fare meant ever so much. So it came about that the journey to Bethune was a serious business; it was as much as Descamps could do to gather together the railway fares. Those were happy days, however. Picture, if you can, myself—a boy of twelve—setting out from the little house of Descamps with my fighting kit under my arm, Descamps swing-

ing a parcel of food, and singing as if he were the first man in all France.

It is not possible in cold print to convey a true idea of the mentality, the outlook, the point of view of Descamps. In my flat in Paris there is a caricature of Descamps which depicts him as a nurse. He is feeding me out of a bottle. Many times do I look and smile at it, for it tells, as nothing else can do, of his deep and sincere attachment to me.

If you could but see inside the house of Descamps you would have spread before you a gallery of pictures and photos of François and myself that speak of the rarest human story that has ever been written.

There is not a great disparity in our ages, but Descamps from the beginning of our association has conveyed to me the idea that he is more than twice my years, and because this is so I have throughout my career been completely obedient to him. I have never questioned the wisdom of making any match; he has ever been free to say, "You will now get ready for this and that fight."

So when after I had lost my first situation, and he had made himself entirely responsible for my upbringing, I readily agreed to take my chances in the savate championships at Bethune. That I was a little boy in knickerbockers, that I had never wandered more than a few miles from home, that I

had not the faintest notion of what my feelings would be when I stood up before a crowd of people, never troubled me in the least degree. It was sufficient to know that Descamps had decided that the time had come for me to begin my fighting career.

Our journey to Bethune I shall never forget. From the time I left Lens until the moment had come to take the ring Descamps scarce left off holding me by the hand.

He introduced me as his "famous pupil" amid a roar of laughter. Said one, "What have you brought? What is this sacrificial offering?"

Descamps merely stormed and talked in his grandiloquent fashion.

Why I was not nervous, why I did not run away, I shall never know. I was in a world of wonders. Descamps must have cast a spell over me, for though a baby I felt a full-grown man.

My first bout I began amid a chorus of titters, but I won, and I reached the final round. I became the darling of the people. To win the championship I had to beat a French corporal named Legrand. He was a man some twenty-five years of age, and weighed about eleven stone. My weight was seven stone.

But Legrand could not get near me. He would rush and kick savagely; I would skip and side-step,

and in the first round I had him down several times. And in the end it was declared that I had won by many points to spare. How I was embraced and squeezed by Descamps! And when he took me to my room and dressed me, with the tenderness of a mother, there were great tears rolling down his cheeks.

Said he, "You have done a wonderful thing. Already I see you a champion, but, my son, though you have won, there is no money prize, for as yet you are an amateur. And I am without a sou. Georges, we have still to get home. Rest awhile, and I will think."

I fell fast asleep on a little wooden bench; empty pockets did not trouble me. I was so delightfully tired. When I awoke Descamps spread out a roll of bread, and when this had disappeared we went out into the streets of Bethune. We stayed the night at a little estaminet, and on the morrow, being without our fare home, we set out to walk. And on our tramp back to Lens we performed outside several cafés, but we collected very few francs. We reached Lens when it was dusk, so that no one ever knew that the "Professor and his pupil" had been reduced to tramps.

The story which Descamps told of my triumph at Lens was a masterpiece in that no story was ever

more highly coloured; and it was not long before he decided that at the first opportunity I should begin as a professional boxer.

And the day arrived when I was to fight the jockey, Salmon. Of my two combats with this exceptionally strong and vigorous fighter I have already told. And here I would only tell of my earliest boxing lessons and explain how I was taught the "science of the game."

To win success in the ring a man must first sink his individuality in order to attain individuality. Paradoxical this may appear to be, but there are paradoxes that are not paradoxes. In this way: A boy who places himself under an instructor will never make progress unless he is entirely and wholly subservient to his teacher. He must put on the gloves believing that he does not know the first principles of how to employ them; he must reduce himself to so much molten metal to be twisted and fashioned according to the notions of his instructor.

When I first went to Descamps and made known that it was my ambition to fight like the English, this is what he said:

"We of France, more particularly those of Lens and the part of France in which we have our home, so I have come to believe, are specially meant for boxing. Men of Northern France have much

phlegm, and in this game of fighting it is the man of phlegm who succeeds. He merely needs teaching, but he must be ready and willing to be taught. Into the pages of boxing history I have delved deep. The book which I will call 'the book of fight' I have studied for long, and I have decided that there are what I will call fundamental principles. These are for you to master, but this you will never do unless your mind becomes my mind; that you think as I do. You must do as you are told. You like fighting? Good! But you do not know how to fight. I will show you."

There was a time when, so it is written, the trainer of boxers was a man with a heart of stone. A Spartan—he insisted on the life of a Spartan. Now, Descamps is entirely human; he is emotional. Never a great fighter himself—I do not think he has the temperament necessary for a fighter—he is yet a born teacher.

His gymnasium in his early days at Lens was a poor, mean room, but by his manner, by the great gift which he possesses of being able to make things appear something which they are not, he caused me to believe that it was a beautiful academy. He would have it that it was an academy, and that was sufficient. When I, a half-frightened child, went for my first boxing lesson, for which, by the way, I did not and

could not pay—how Descamps lived in those days will ever be an unsolvable mystery to me—this is how Descamps appeared to me.

In the centre of a room not more than ten feet long, ceiling low and blackened by smoke from old and feeble oil lamps, he stood bowing and laughing and sniggering.

"Entrez, Monsieur Carpentier, also welcome," he cried.

Decked out in a sweater that approximated Joseph's coat, his black hair, which is now splashed with grey, standing on end, and slapping gloves that were ridiculously big and broken here and there, he enlarged upon the importance of his position—that he was "Professor Descamps."

I have not made the acquaintance of another professor, but I doubt whether there is one who, before I had emerged from the embryonic stage, could be such a martinet as Descamps. I am sure there is no one who seeks to impart the noble art in the way he does, or at least did then. I imagined that he was arrayed in a cap and gown instead of frayed old yellow flannels and a sweater that in the matter of colouring was a rainbow.

I began my lessons by learning to stand easily, naturally, perfectly. And I would say that it is of the first importance to acquire a correct pose. If you

will take the trouble, you will find not a few boxers who seek to make a living out of the game stand with their toes turned in, which means that they have not learned their lessons as one would learn his alphabet.

I attach every importance to stance, to style. If you do not begin at the beginning in any form of sport, you will never be anything but a splutterer. In boxing, as in everything, there is a right and a wrong way. Fastidious to a degree was Descamps when he took me under his wing, and he would not allow a soul to see me before I had got what he termed the correct method. I distinctly remember one afternoon in his gymnasium, for then he perched me on a stool and delivered something like the following lecture :

" You have come to me because you have been smitten by the English boxers you have seen in the booth at the fair. You would be one of them. No. They are bruisers, coarse, uncouth men. They have twisted noses ; their ears are big and puffed—balloons. The fighter, my fighter, must be an artist ; he must be a student, a doctor of physiology ; he must understand psychology ; he must know men, their strength, their weakness. The clever, the distinguished boxer must be a man of brain, a scientist—no brute. It is the skill, the science of boxing that I will teach.

And when you go out into the world it will not be as a man killer, but as a skilful, disciplined athlete. Individuality, personality will count for much. It will be as a man of stone, a man of ice that you will appear to be; of temper you shall have none.

"I, Professor Descamps, will be the one with a temper, hot-headed, impetuous, a clown, a volcano. And now you understand. For days, for weeks, maybe for months, you will do no boxing. You must first be prepared for boxing."

And with that ceased the stream of words, weird and fantastic, which flowed from Descamps.

Descamps, having thus delivered himself, sought to make me expert on a home-made trapeze; he taught me about swinging, the while he whistled an accompaniment; tumbling and general acrobatics he introduced, and made me practise them so that I could twist and turn after the manner of a contortionist. All this was done so as to acquire a body of elastic, and to this very day the acrobatic exercises which I practised in my earliest days at Lens I include in my training for a big fight. They serve a double purpose—they cause the body to be all suppleness, they take the mind away from fighting, and so make training a likeable business.

But what Descamps did not teach me was in-fighting. It was Klaus who was my teacher in this

phase of boxing, and by it—helped as he was by Descamps, who, fearing that I would be permanently hurt, stopped the contest—he beat me. I am certain that few boxers really and truly know what in-fighting is. It is not the mere getting and rushing to close quarters; it demands the highest possible skill, and also it requires a most competent referee to appreciate and permit it.

If I had not fought Frank Klaus and Billy Papke —terrible, wonderful in-fighters—I do not believe that I would have beaten Bombardier Wells at Ghent. In him I was meeting a man who was not only some stones heavier than I was, but one with a mighty reach, and a left hand which, if he were to use it as he can do and does when he is in training, would take him right to the top of the tree.

It was impossible for me to hope to win by boxing; that is, by leading with the left hand and bringing the right over to the jaw, for though I stretch myself to my fullest height, he was still very many inches taller. Foolishly, in the first round, I stood bolt upright and then rushed at him—madly, I confess. Out shot his left hand, brought me up with a jolt, and while I was shivering and shaking he connected his right with my chin, so that I was half beaten. When because of the softness that is in him he permitted me to recover my normal senses in the

second round, I remembered Klaus and Papke, and I said to myself, " If I can only get inside his guard, if I can only reach his body, I am sure I shall win, for then I will be like Klaus and Papke."

In the third round I pretended that I put every store on my left hand, that I would be severely orthodox, and Wells, with but one idea—that to box on approved lines, and conscious of his immense physical advantage—was hoodwinked. He half dropped his guard, and like a flash I got inside, and I pummelled his body, muttering as I did so, " Now or never."

" Do you know," Wells afterwards said, " every time you punched I imagined that you were driving great long nails into my body."

In these remarks I saw the nakedness of the fighting soul of Bombardier Wells; his sensitiveness, his susceptibility to pain. When I drove my left and right hand to his long body at Ghent, Wells, had he possessed the mental equipment of a real fighter, would not have doubled up as a man seized with violent, excruciating cramp. He would have stiffened himself and not broken away; his telescopic left hand would have shot out, and I would have been held at bay. I would have been impotent, utterly helpless.

Now, Wells can build an almost impregnable defence, but only when he is away from the public.

A Chapter on François Descamps

When I beat the Bombardier at the National Sporting Club in December, 1913, a famous boxer screamed "coward" at Wells; but Wells is no coward—not a physical coward. Merely has he not got deep down in him the mental qualities that are absolutely essential before a man can be a complete fighter. When he sent me spinning in the Floral Hall of Ghent Exhibition, all he had to do was to wait until I rose, then win the fight with a right-handed punch.

This I told him, and his reply was: "There was something in me that held me back; some unconquerable thing that told me I had done enough; I was stricken with your pitiable, helpless condition."

It was this indefinable, subtle something that caused him to lose against the late Al Palzer. He had the American all at sea—a half-broken, floundering man—then his fighting senses deserted him; he sickened at the spectacle of a sprawling man. It was ever so with Wells; he knows this to be so; he has fought to subdue his squeamishness, but when last I saw him against Beckett he was the same old Wells—an astonishing, remarkable heavy-weight, who, were he endowed with a gift of doing things thoroughly, would challenge comparison with the best men in all the countries.

Much has been said and written about Wells's

weak spot. It has been said that the weakness is a physical one. It is not; in a fighting sense it is a mental weakness, and all the training, all the efforts to produce a waist-line of steel will be of no avail. He has not got the fighter's headpiece. To me the position, the condition of Wells is a tragedy. Here you have a man blessed with all the physical qualities that go to make a world's champion, but he is without viciousness—he is afraid of inflicting pain, and this is the explanation of his amazing ups and downs.

But there is something else that is deficient in Wells—he has not, so far as I have seen, endeavoured to combine the best methods of the English school with the effectiveness of the American fighters. I hold that fundamentally there is only one way of boxing—that is, the English way; but whilst I am a firm and complete believer in the efficacy of the straight left, I would preach the gospel of the in-fighter.

In-fighting is a wonderful science; by it you can reduce the tallest man imaginable to your own height, but you must know how to in-fight. In-fighting is not hitting in holds; it does not mean muscle-pinching, done to produce a kind of muscular paralysis; neither has it to do with wrestling or sheer scrambling.

Before you can in-fight you must engage in a battle of wits by which you seek to squeeze through your opponent's defence. Then, with feet fastened

tight to the floor of the ring, you bring blows to the body that start from the hip. Should your opponent seek protection by means of his elbows, should he strive to shake you off with half-arm jolts, you, half resting your head on his chest, follow his arms so as to anticipate and be prepared for his blows, and if you do you will give to your body almost complete invulnerability.

Much that passes for in-fighting is no more than blind swiping; a man will rush to close quarters and punch with his eyes shut; he has no sort of notion how to protect himself. Real in-fighting is not cuddling, but much of what we are asked to consider in-fighting is nothing of the kind, no more than tearing and ripping.

When I was still a boy Descamps, whenever possible, took me to watch Harry Lewis and other splendid American boxers who had come to Paris. During his first year in France Lewis was unbeatable; I thought he was the greatest man alive. So I studied his ways minutely. What I considered to be his speciality was the delivery of two blows almost simultaneously—left, right, one-two fashion. To do the double punch properly, I found much study and practice were necessary, but I mastered it, and though to do it is to court not a little risk, the perfect exponent of it is bound to achieve greatness.

It was the Americans who convinced me that supreme orthodoxy was wrong; they, because in my probationary days I saw more of them than English fighters, taught me that a man should not fight twice alike. Different boxers, different methods.

Let me endeavour to demonstrate what I mean. If to-morrow I had to fight another Klaus or Papke I would seek only to box; I would never fight in an uncompromising or slogging way, for to do so would be to court almost certain defeat—I would play into their hands by engaging in their own special game, at which they are masters; but if it were Wells I had to meet, I should be an out-and-out fighter, for the odds are that in sheer, correct, orthodox boxing the Bombardier would certainly out-point me, but I know he is not considered a fighter of an unyielding type.

Do you know what encouraged me to believe that I would beat Beckett? It was his undisguised and much-advertised belief and satisfaction that he was a fighter. His very sureness of his strength, his little thought of skill, convinced me before I took the ring that he had but one way—to pummel and to batter. I may be mistaken, but I believe that Beckett has no room for finesse. Of this I was sure when I saw him against Wells.

He rushed and tore at the Bombardier, and was

fortunate in landing heavily on the body of Wells. Now, had Wells obeyed the first principles of boxing, he would have side-stepped and escaped a blow which made him sick and which beat him before the contest had scarce begun.

From that night until December 4 I was positive that Beckett would adopt the same tactics against me as against Wells. Descamps agreed; and in my training I paid most attention to increasing my speed, for it was obvious to me that if I was fast on my feet and kept a well-balanced head Beckett would not catch me. It is possible—I really do not know—that Beckett imagined that I would seek to do something unusual, that I would bring out an entirely new trick; at all events, he was totally unprepared for my doing the first thing a boy is taught when he gives himself over to boxing. I led with my left and landed, and I did exactly the same thing a second later when, after he had shaken his head, he came snorting after me.

When I planted the blow on the place I intended to land it, I found it difficult to believe that I was up against a champion. "Surely," I began to say to myself, "Beckett will not take a straight left again." And I confess that when I sent my left out a second time I expected that he would either so deflect his head so as to take the blow on the shoulder, or block

it with his right after the approved and elementary way. He did nothing of the kind, and I found it hard to disguise my sureness that I would win a quick and easy victory.

The temptation to gamble in my right hand there and then was tremendous; it required a superhuman effort to refrain from doing so. Realizing that if I revealed my right and missed, Beckett would perhaps shake off the trouble to which he had been reduced, I drew him to close quarters by backing on to the ropes in front of the referee, Mr. Angle. My idea in doing so was to try and discover the extent of Beckett's qualities as an in-fighter. I had already made certain that I was the better boxer, but so as to make doubly sure that I would win if he was not strongest at close quarters, I pretended, by setting my back to the ropes, that I was in a tight corner.

Something like a leer came into Beckett's face as he came flat-footed towards me, and with teeth set tight he swung his left and right. I had so arranged myself that there was no place on my face or jaw he could strike; this he appeared to realize, and he made for my body. His eyes were shut; he did not look to see exactly what he was doing, and so, instead of punching on a spot that mattered, I dropped my arms and took the blows on my elbows. He did not get one real, telling blow home, so I

skipped away from him and determined to wager everything on my right. I felt that there was no time to be lost, for I had convinced myself of these two great things—that I was the better boxer and at in-fighting I felt that Beckett was no wonder.

The ease and readiness with which I beat Beckett is the only explanation I can offer for the widely spread belief that I carry a " hypnotic punch." How perfectly ridiculous!

But I find that even the unimaginative, tall, awkward, all-cornered Gunboat Smith believes that there is something uncanny about me and my manager, for in an article which he has written about my coming fight with Dempsey he warned the American to steel himself against the machinations of Descamps.

I grant that Descamps is weird when ranged alongside his fellows; he surely has a way with him, but he is no hypnotist, though he is a past-master of make-believe, and as such I am free to confess that he has had much to do with winning many of my matches.

In this way; In match-making, in everything he does outside of actual fighting, by his mannerisms, his pomposity, if you will, his great sense of humour, the mystical way he has of doing everything, his outrageous dress—in my gymnasium, especially when

visitors are present, he suggests something between a golliwog and a Russian bear—causes all attention to be focused upon him. He is Lord High Everything, and for a purpose. By his eccentricity, which eccentricity is more assumed than real, he causes everybody to fasten their eyes upon him.

See him come to the ring-side as I am about to appear. From my dressing-room he will come as the leader of a triumphant procession, humming some fantastic melody and carrying bottles, sponges, towels, all manner of things—not in any matter-of-fact way, but so as to suggest that he was the manufacturer of wonder-working contraptions and concoctions. See him cut an orange into halves.

Taking a murderous-looking knife from his pocket, he will sharpen the blade on his hand, hold up the fruit, and the while he mutters he slashes it into two pieces, smiling fiendishly as if to spread the impression that he has decapitated some mortal enemy.

A bottle of mineral water he will uncork and sniff at the contents. Having looked at it fondly, he will snigger as if he were sure that he possessed a corpse-reviver. On one occasion at the National Sporting Club he was making play with a bottle of mineral water when Mr. Douglas, who was the referee, asked what it was. Obviously, he feared that it contained

some harmful dope. Descamps bowed gracefully and took a swig at the water. "Très bien!" he cried, and Mr. Douglas returned to his seat amid much laughter.

"Georges," Descamps once said to me, "sometimes I wonder whether you think I am crazy. I am, but there is method in my craziness. I want everybody to think I am crazy, for a crazy man, if he is not too impossible, is interesting; he causes all eyes to be fixed on him. So when you fight, not only do people say, 'What is Descamps up to?' but your opponent also gets in that frame of mind that he forgets you and can only think of me. So you win. Eh?"

I shall never forget my first fight at which moving pictures were taken. At the end of it there was some very small trouble, and Descamps, picking up a bottle, seemed likely to connect it with the head of Monsieur Vienne, the first promoter in France. When the hullabaloo had subsided, a mutual friend asked Descamps why he had brandished the bottle as if he were intent on murder.

"It was good for the pictures, eh?" was Descamps' explanation.

But seriously, whilst the hypnotic theory, so far as I am concerned, is absurd, I do unhesitatingly declare that more than one fight is won and lost

because of personality. I would never dream of going into a fight without first spending all my leisure moments studying the type, the character, and the mentality of the man I had been matched against.

Psychology enters into boxing in a greater degree, perhaps, than any other game, and it is the student of psychology, given the necessary physical qualities, who will make most headway. It has been remarked within recent times that the secret of the success and the progress of boxing in France lies in perfect training. But this is not wholly true; for while nine out of every ten French boxers take the ring well, even perfectly trained, every one of them has had impressed upon him the value of close study of character, of temperament, so that by a process of what I would call boxing logic he is able to appreciate the type of man against whom he is called upon to do battle. The French school of boxing is not entirely distinctive, but I consider it to be different from the English and the American schools, because it is built on a combination of styles and ways.

First, we have always striven to be our natural selves; we have clung to our newness, youthfulness, and as a new boxing country we have taken to ourselves a licence to be less stereotyped than the average Britisher and American. When we set out to box we went to Britain, and what we considered to be

the best, the most efficacious methods we assimilated greedily and thoroughly. When Americans were appearing regularly in France we copied what we held to be their strongest points, and sought to merge them into our ideas, which sprang from naturalness and a genuine, intense love for glove-fighting.

So as boxers we are partially French, British and American. The fact that my country has provided heavy, light-heavy, feather and bantam European champions is because we have been able to make our boxing typical of the best of three countries, and from the first as little like machinery as possible.

What is termed "the fighting machine" does not necessarily mean a man generously endowed with those physical attributes a fighter must have; my conception of a "fighting machine" is a man who, besides being hard and little susceptible to hurt, is one who is steeped in the science of perfect hitting, and, above all, one who, whether inside or outside the ring, is always thinking and studying the science of fighting. Fighting is a trade, a profession; it means a battle of wits and the survival of the fittest.

In my flat in Rue Brunel, Paris, I have collected as many books on ring history and the lure of fighting as possible. They have long been my companions. From out of my library I, from time to time, take this and that champion, and I seek to re-create that

which is laid down to be the secret of his greatness. That which may be termed the personal side of the giants of the ring I devour, just as I like to dwell upon the idiosyncrasies of latter-day champions.

When I was a boy and Descamps was my only teacher, he would, after my boxing lessons, tell me of the men who made the ring the fascinating, magical, human thing it is; the coarseness of the ring, the brutality of it, he would never enlarge upon; only of its romance, its arresting personalities would he speak, and you who would apply to boxing a right perspective—those, too, who would practise it—will find in the books written upon it, and the men who stand out as its chief exponents to-day, much food for entertainment and instruction. Get hold of the personal, the human side of boxing, and you will then agree that the game is one of thrills.

CHAPTER XVII

MEN I HAVE FOUGHT

I WOULD write of some of the fighters I have fought and others I have known.

Jim Driscoll I shall always consider to have been one of the greatest of champions. It was not my good fortune to see him at his best, but even now there is no such stylist, no more perfect model of a boxer in all the countries. It is sometimes said that a boxer can scarcely hope to achieve greatness if he has unusual imagination. Driscoll destroys any such supposition. He has all the fire of his race; his brain is all life and sparkle; his eyes are all light and brightness; his form is a classical form; his face bespeaks high intelligence. Driscoll was never a fighter in the popular sense; he was, and even in the winter of his boxing days is, a wonderful man of boxing science. He has been described as the personification of the English school; but not the English school as it is to-day, for its members are given to running before they can walk. They are not deep-thinking students; they have never been taught as Driscoll was taught. Charles Ledoux has told me

that never has he been so belittled as he was by Driscoll.

This Ledoux, the majority of the critics say, is no boxer—just a slogger. Ledoux can and does box cleverly, but not like Driscoll. Driscoll was the king of all boxers. From Driscoll, by a close study of his ways, I learned the wisdom of always leading with the left hand; he taught me much about stance, and how to time my blows so that they would have all the weight of my body behind them. What a different fighter Pal Moore, the American bantam, would be if he had been taught and trained by Driscoll!

In Moore we have a little man with the heart of a giant, astonishingly fast on his feet; but he does not know how to stand; he does not know how to hit. I witnessed his fight against Eugene Criqui at the Albert Hall on Boxing Day last year, and never have I seen a man who was able to come near to world's championship class so completely unable to hit straight and always with a closed glove. Moore I regarded as a burlesque of boxing. Yet he won. He pranced and danced to victory; he was the fire-work of the ring.

How different from the old English champion Joe Bowker. He would skip and dart and dodge in a way bewildering, but what a boxer! And yet he

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CARPENTIER IN FIGHTING TRIM

lost to Ledoux at the National Sporting Club because he was too clever. Having outboxed the pocket Hercules of France, and when it was overwhelming odds on his winning, Bowker turned his head so as to convey to his seconds how easy was his task. He dared to wink, and Ledoux hit him on the jaw and took all the fight out of him. Bowker, I have always suspected, was an incorrigible humorist.

But of all present-day English fighters surely there is none comparable to Jimmy Wilde. None of us will ever see the like of him again. As a boxer he is an outrage on convention. Wilde belongs to no school; he is all wrong, and yet supreme. For he is a human shadow. Physically of not much account, he is yet a man of steel. This is the pen picture I would draw of this uncanny Welshman:

Baby-faced, with grey, dull, sleepy, little eyes; hair thin; a neck skinny; arms like yard sticks, feet, for his size, inordinately big, almost flat-footed. The first time I beheld him it was impossible for me to believe that he was the most wonderful fighter in the world. Yet he was.

Wilde must be a man, in a boxing sense, of the highest mental calibre. Men who have met him have told me that he can hit as hard as many heavy-weights; I know that his sense of distance is marvellous, that although he affects no guard as a

guard is understood to be, he has a defence that is of the stoutest possible kind.

Wilde is not a "box of tricks," as Pedlar Palmer was; he is more of a phantom, for when a man would hit him, oftener than not he is not there to be hit. His power, his one-time invincibility came from his brain. You would not think, as you noted his small, leaden eyes, that he was able to take complete stock of an opponent by one glance at him; yet this he was able to do, and no man within my memory, by skill that was matchless, could so emphatically outwit an opponent and make him do things he would believe it were impossible to do.

Some young men who have seen Wilde have perhaps tried to copy him. If they have, they will have failed signally. Wilde is a freak—a wonder. I have seen him when he has given to his left hand the appearance of a piston-rod; I have watched him when he has tucked it away and aped the ways of a right-handed fighter. Maybe Wilde has had his greatest day, but as long as the ring lasts we shall surely remember him as a pugilistic marvel, a speck of a man—only just a trifle more than seven stone was he when at his best—who was a veritable giant-killer. Wilde, from the first day he wandered from the South Wales coal-fields, was the David of the ring, and he slew not one, but many Goliaths.

Wilde, however, is only a little less wonderful than my countryman Ledoux; not as a boxer, for the Welshman, if he so wills, is a perfect boxer, and this Ledoux has never been, but as a fighter. Ledoux has been well termed "the human cyclone." A more fearless, merciless boxer I do not know. I have seen him when he has stood up under terrific punishment; I have looked on when he has been reduced to a tottering man, but I have never known him to be robbed of his strength. I have seen him go into the last round half-blinded, when he has been torn and battered, and he has fought with tigerish ferocity and won a fight in the last minute by sheer determination. I doubt whether there is a bantam alive who can and does hit harder than he. There is none who gambles so furiously in his stamina without decreasing his hitting power.

As I have stated, when I could do the bantam limit, I fought Ledoux and won, but to this day I shall never forget the punishment I received. In the ring Ledoux is terrible; he has been called the "apache"; but do you know that a more docile man never walked abroad. He has two beings—one all fierceness, the other all softness.

A strange, rare mixture is Ledoux. I shall always remember his first fight in Paris after his demobilization. He arrived at the Cirque de Paris with his good

wife, and was for all the world like a man out on a shopping expedition. Ledoux speaks softly, almost timidly, and yet he is a monster among the world's bantams.

During a recent visit to London, in a discussion with Mr. A. F. Bettinson, the manager of the National Sporting Club, on the heavy-weight championship, he ventured to express the opinion, shared by many competent judges, that although Langford suffered from lack of height, he would probably have beaten Jack Johnson. As a twelve-stone man, Langford in his prime was unquestionably the best in the world. The physical make-up of most negroes touches the extraordinary, but in many respects Langford was unlike any other human being, white or black, I have ever seen.

His head was as a shining, highly burnished cannon ball, and I am sure as hard. His nose was of spread-eagled pattern; his arms were gorilla-like. Standing bolt upright he could almost touch his calves; his back suggested a wall of coal; his chest was prodigious; in height he was ridiculously small.

Langford had as quick an eye as any man the ring has known, and there never was a more aggressive two-handed fighter; and his reach was almost phenomenal. Whether he would have beaten Jack Johnson must always be a matter of speculation, but

I do not think there is such a heavy-weight as Langford was.

There is a good story of Langford. Not so very long ago, when brought out of virtual retirement, he was put up against a brother negro. It was arranged that there would be no knock-out blow; the affair, which was one of six rounds, was to go the limit, and was to take the form of an exhibition.

In the second round Langford received a terrific blow on the jaw, and down he went flat. His brother negro exulted accordingly, believing that he had knocked Sam out. But Langford scrambled to his feet, and almost simultaneously the bell went. The round was over. Coming into the next round, Langford walked to his man and shook him cordially by the hand.

"Say," said he, "this ain't the last round, Sam."

"Oh, yes," replied Langford, "guess it is; certain it is. It is the very last round, believe me."

And it was, for Langford promptly stretched the nigger on the floor of the ring.

Langford, Jeannette, McVea and Johnson are the last of the great black fighters. This, because Johnson has made it so. Whites and blacks for the world's championship will never again meet after Reno. Johnson knew it. Of that I am certain, and no one will be sorry. I have never drawn the colour

line, and if such a man as Jeannette were in the ring to-day I should be more than half inclined to meet him. But we know of no Jeannette now, and, besides, following what happened after Johnson had laid low the shell of the real Jim Jeffries, clashing of colours is not conducive to the good of the game, and yet if a black man were champion to-day I should, in my present frame of mind, court a match with him.

On the eve of the Grand Prix in June, 1914, I was prevailed upon to act as referee of the fight in Paris between Johnson and Frank Moran, who began life as a dentist in Pittsburg. I had never seen Johnson in action, and I gladly accepted the position offered to me by both fighters and their managers.

Johnson had, by the fastness of his life, eaten away much of his ability, but I am sure that before he lost his balance he must have been an extraordinarily great pugilist. Physically, he had everything in his favour, but never, as I watched him, have I known a man who was so difficult to hit. Moran was no wonder worker; he was just strong, and a sort of ironclad, but he was no ordinary feeble pugilist. In his right hand he carried a sure knock-out blow. The accepted character of Johnson makes him out to be a particularly obtuse and objectionable fellow; as I saw him in Paris in 1914 I thought he was more vain than wicked.

Against Moran he was certainly not a vicious fighter. There was in him much of the cat when it has a mouse; he was tantalising. He mauled and clawed Moran, and for ever did he chide his opponent because he was helpless. Johnson would have him at his mercy, and then let him run loose to pick him up and make him smart and wince. There was no necessity for him to carry the fight to his opponent. With him, against Moran, it was, "Now let me see whether you can hit me."

Moran, grey-faced, red-haired, would press all the blood out of his lips and come helter-skelter after Johnson and strike out savagely. Johnson with, "That's good; try again, Frank," would calmly catch the blow on his glove, as would a baseball player take the ball. Johnson was the shiftiest, and in a defensive game the cleverest, the most cunning fighter I have seen. And he found it possible to do his fighting the while he chatted and prattled.

I have often wondered what would have happened to Wells had his match with Johnson not been scotched by the London police authorities. I can picture Johnson, flashing his teeth of diamonds and gold, going to the Bombardier as he sat in his corner and saying, "Mistah Bombardier Wells, I suppose. Wal, this nig is little Arthur Jack Johnson. Ise sorry, Mistah, if Ise spoil your good looks, but Ise

not going to hurt you—oh, no! But I guess you'll be a wise guy if you say your prayers."

Johnson was a master of taunts, and I can picture my friend Wells fuming and fidgeting and also beaten before he stood up.

When he met Tommy Burns at Rushcutter's Bay, Sydney, Johnson was unbeatable.

Although Johnson in the one fight in which I saw him—that against Frank Moran—impressed me most by his defensive qualities, and he came to be written down as a non-aggressive and purely defensive fighter, I think the world generally only regarded him as such because neither Tommy Burns nor Jim Jeffries had it in him to force him to attack for all he was worth. But Johnson was a man with a kink, and this came from his vanity. He was conceited, but his conceit had at least some humour in it. With a weakness for the employment of words of an uncommon length, and as chief of the Malaprops, he always seemed to me to be most concerned in making some new and particularly vitriolic taunt.

Perhaps it would not be suspected, but it is nevertheless a fact, that when fighting had to be done he was the soul of good temper and playfulness; and yet there was in him much viciousness.

Pat O'Keeffe, the retired British middle-weight champion, whom I knocked out in two rounds at Nice

in January, 1914, could tell some delightful stories about Johnson. O'Keeffe, it will perhaps be remembered, was in Johnson's corner at Rushcutter's Bay. When Burns appeared, Johnson, who was execrated by Burns, went over to him and said, "Hallo, Tahmmy. Guess you've got some nice dressing-gown. But, I say, dat's the dressing-gown for a picnic."

Now, it was always held until that day at Sydney that Burns was king among sharp-tongued pugilists, but he lost by many miles in the game of repartee to Johnson.

I did not see that fight, but O'Keeffe, a dear, delightful old man of the ring, were he to give you his description of Johnson as he was and as he behaved against the then world's champion, would convince you, as he convinced me, that if Johnson had cared he could have ended the fight in the first round. To have done so would not have suited his purpose; in a studied, fiendish way Johnson was cruel. He purposely toyed with Burns, and before he hit him he would say, "Tahmmy, now I am going to hit you. Look!"

And Johnson always did what he threatened to do.

I do believe that the only occasion on which Johnson lost his temper in the ring was when, after beating

the resurrected Jeffries, he met the late Stanley Ketchell, a much lighter man, as you who know boxing will recollect, but very much a wonder, if I have read the stories of his fights aright.

I have often pictured Ketchell as another Kid McCoy, spruce, dapper, something of a dandy and a lady-killer. It has always been my belief that Johnson consented to meet Ketchell because, if it were a ridiculous match—I have an idea that all parties took the result for granted—Johnson had to win on points. Now, Ketchell evidently had other notions, for in the fight's infancy he saw his opportunity to slap Johnson on the chin, and he embraced it.

Ping! and Johnson was sent flying on his back. Roars and great glee, of course, for Johnson was never popular; no man in the history of the ring was so given to burning his boats. But Johnson was not out, as was hoped and believed; he just shook his head, set his gold teeth blazing, jumped to his feet, and Stanley Ketchell was no more.

When I sat at the ringside and watched Johnson against Moran, I thought he was maddening in the casual way in which he caught a blow from Moran; I do believe that had he cared he could have prevented his opponent putting a glove upon him; had it suited his purpose he could have ended the fight when he pleased. That it went twenty rounds was because it

suited him to make it last so long; he appeared to take a ghoulish pleasure in showing how severe were the limitations of Moran.

I confess that although at the time Johnson was nothing like the man he was when he fought Burns, I should have thought long and deeply before trying to take his title from him, and I suffered to be tempted when it was suggested that I might take my chances against him. As a matter of fact, after a conference with Descamps, I decided that if I beat Jeannette in a thoroughly convincing way, I would challenge Johnson. Jeannette was to serve as a trial horse.

Perhaps it is as well that Franz Reichel declared that I was the loser at Lunar Park, for upon reflection it is possible, nay probable, that I would have suffered a severe set-back. Yet in a way my contest with Jeannette intensified my desire, my ambition to go all out for the world's title, and had I not won my match with Gunboat Smith on a foul—that is, if I had been declared the winner when I had the American on the floor for thirteen seconds—Descamps would have thrown down the gauntlet, as per arrangement. In 1914 I was absolutely at my best.

I am not one to harbour regrets, but I do believe that had not the war come I should have tried for the world's championship by the time I was twenty-one. But whether or no, I should have been so financially

strong that I would have been in a position to have retired from the ring when I had gained my majority. At nineteen I was a millionaire in francs; in two more years, at the rate at which money was then coming to me, I should have had a second million.

Still, my five years of soldiering, if it meant my income being reduced from tens of thousands of pounds a year to a sou a day, was worth it. I found new manhood in the Army of my country; I read a new book on life; the war took me to great humanity. And it may be, had not the war snatched from me all but a skeleton of the fortune I had in 1914, I would not have returned to the ring. The lure of fighting will never desert me; I feel that I was meant to be a fighter, but until I came through my contest with Dick Smith I only saw the necessity of fighting. Then the mad shouts of praise that followed my victory over this gallant English soldier made my passion to box and fight greater than ever.

I have, in writing about the psychology of boxers, treated with Bombardier Wells; I have sought to visualize Papke, Klaus, Jeannette, Johnson and others, but a pugilist about whom I have not yet written, save by the way, is Young Ahearn, whose real name, I understand, is Woodward. There was in England, as was natural after my defeat of Bombardier Wells and my victory over Gunboat Smith,

a wholehearted desire to see whether there was not an Englishman who could stay the boxing progress of France.

Almost immediately after my battle with Smith certain English sportsmen, headed by Mr. Horatio Bottomley, decided that of all Britishers likely to lower my colours this Ahearn, otherwise Woodward, who by birth was a Lancastrian, was the one. He was a middle-weight, and he came to capture the hearts of the English by a swift and dramatic victory over Sergeant Braddock, who in the war won the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

If there ever was a fighter to the last gasp, as distinct from a boxer, that man was Braddock. In strength, character, courage and physique he was made for the game of fighting, and when he appeared at the National Sporting Club he began his contest with Ahearn as if possessed by fury, as if he were intent on little short of murder.

Ahearn withstood his onslaught without turning a hair; by almost matchless skill, it was declared, he caused Braddock to get into a tangle, and then quickly, surely, he hammered him into defeat. "The best man since Ted Pritchard," it was said of Ahearn.

I knew much of Ahearn. Many times had I seen him in Paris, for he was under the same manager as Jeannette—Mr. Dan McKettrick. How I should

have fared against Ahearn it would be ridiculous to say, but I am sure the contest, had not the war caused it to be abandoned, would have been a great one, for Ahearn, not inaptly, was described as a human flash. When I volunteered for war I agreed, as soon as hostilities ceased, to meet him; but Ahearn, shortly after his return to America, lost all his form, and what has become of him I do not know.

However, as everybody knows, it was Beckett against whom I defended my heavy-weight title, not Ahearn, not Bombardier Wells, who, I was certain, would have been my first opponent in London. I am sure Wells will not mind my saying so, but when we boxers who had been in the Army began to prepare for the ring again he told me in his quiet, gentle, sincere way that he was a new and splendidly different man—stronger, he said, and nerves all gone. When I look back and realize that Wells is still clutching for the position which, by reason of his boxing skill, he should hold, his "discovery" that he had "fighting blood" was truly pathetic. Of all the men I have fought and known, there is none who would give me greater pleasure than Wells if he were to come into his kingdom. That I, his friend, should doubt whether he will turn his physical qualities into such practical account as to become champion again may seem strange, but after his display against Beckett,

how can one suppose that he has the fighting morale? Various writers, in offering an explanation of the position of Wells, have said that he is too imaginative, and these same writers predicted a victory of Beckett against me because they said, "Here we have a fighter who is not troubled with imagination."

But must a boxer be a dull, unimaginative person? I grant that there is no place in pugilism for the hyper-sensitive or the neurotic person. A fighter must have iron in his soul; he must let the brute that is in every man have his freedom when in the ring, but he must have the mind, with sufficient imagination in it to let the brute loose only at the psychological moment; he must, when victory is at hand, go all out to win—not to win by battering, but by hitting his opponent so hard, so surely, and in the most vulnerable spot that he will win by inflicting a minimum amount of pain.

I agree that it were hard to imagine two men more unlike in every conceivable respect than Beckett and Wells; Beckett needs no advertisement to make known his profession; indubitably Wells does. But really, are they so markedly dissimilar as appearances and point of view and general physical make-up suggest they are?

We have all talked about the "hypnotic touch," the "Indian sign" at some time or another, but what

we strictly mean is personality. When I saw Beckett against Wells I was with the English writers who put much store on the fact that Beckett had no imagination, for on that occasion no one could or would have suspected that he even dreamed of anything else but fighting; but since then I have had it forced upon me that Wells, by his manner, by his carriage, by even such little apparent nothings as plucking at his gloves and staring at the cinema lights and making a whispered request for a drink before the fight began, encouraged Beckett in his belief that he already had the contest won. Wells is without what I call personality—a fighting personality; what the man-in-the-street will have as the "Indian sign," or what one English critic suggested I possessed—the power to hypnotize.

Now, Beckett, if he ever thought or studied Wells at all, knew that the Bombardier when he confronted him would not and could not have attempted to play any rôle other than that of a very nice and engaging, but wholly uncharacteristic Englishman.

And Wells, instead of peering into nothingness and finding it difficult to sit still the while preliminaries were completed, had he laughed and joked and assumed a don't-care-a-hang-I-am-bound-to-win manner, the probability is that Beckett, even though, as is said, he is unimaginative, would have fallen to

saying, "What's up with Wells? Fancy the Bombardier relishing the idea of tackling me!" Beckett would have been puzzled to know what had come over Wells. He is the type of man it is not difficult to make believe that you have found some special, newfangled blow. A beaming, joyous, happy, confident Wells would be a revelation; he would certainly have been a revelation to Beckett, and he would as such, I think, have won, because he would have had a personality—a personality which would have blotted out Beckett.

I have said that Wells is without a personality; I mean that strong, forceful, impelling something which we call character, but which in modern boxing parlance is designated "the Indian sign," or if we are to take the maker of catchy phrases seriously, "the hypnotic touch." If we were to obliterate "the Indian sign," "the hypnotic touch," and treat with and study psychology, the public who are bitten with the ring would come to have a better and finer appreciation of the importance of those differences in fighters which are psychological and not merely physical.

It has been said that I would always beat both. I believe I would. But not by means of the "Indian sign" or the "hypnotic touch"; not because I am a dabbler in "black magic," but because I have so

analysed the temperament of these two men that I believe I can convince them that I possess a strength greater than I actually have, and a something which they have not.

I have said that I do not think that Beckett and Wells are so dissimilar as they appear to be. And I think I say that which is very true. Wells has not the faculty that permits him to disguise the fact that he is nervous; Beckett, unless you watch him closely, appears to have this faculty. But those who took stock of him when he came into the ring at the Holborn Stadium will say with me that he was very agitated, and they will say, too, that he was not the unimaginative oak-like man he had been pictured.

The first thing I set myself to do after I had shaken hands with him and hoped that he was very well, was to watch every little movement, though I suggested to those who were looking on that I had no other thought except to see that I affixed my bandages securely. But I followed him with my eyes nevertheless, so did Descamps; and when Beckett, before he took the chair in his corner, began to describe semicircles in his walk around and scratched the resined floor, as it were, with his foot, I whispered to Wilson, my masseur, as he invited me to put a hand in a glove, "This Beckett is nervous."

From the first time I saw Beckett I wondered whether I would cause him to think that I had the more towering personality. I sought to discover this in many ways. On my first acquaintance with him I decided that it was true what his countrymen said of him, that he had no patience with anything but actual fighting. When he came to spar with his brother George in Paris he was a very phlegmatic, stern, stubborn, practical Beckett, but during my training at Stanmore and on the occasions when I went to the Holborn Stadium to see the weekly boxing shows there I thought I detected a change in his demeanour. He never lost his confidence in himself, but the more polite I sought to be the more uncomfortable did he become; he wanted to get away from me.

Gradually I forced whatever personality I had on to him until he became irritable. The same with Mr. Bernard Mortimer. I caused one of my friends to go to Southampton and say to him, "Have you seen Carpentier at work yet?" The reply was, "No. We are not troubling about him, and Joe does not want to see him until he gets into the ring." Little feelers of this kind were most helpful to me, and I so got on to the mind of Beckett as to become an obsession. I neither employed the "Indian sign" nor the "hypnotic touch."

I qualified to meet Dempsey because of three important factors: (1) Perfect and happy training; (2) a careful and successful cultivation of indifference and *sangfroid*, which came to be mistaken (how laughable!) for "hypnotism"; (3) a strict and the closest regard for the rules which make for correct and orthodox boxing. And there I will leave my fight with Beckett.

Of the methods I pursue in training, I think these are already well known. I have always insisted that I should be a law unto myself. I have, of course, certain fixed principles, and they take this form. I begin by spending days in the open. I do not start upon strenuous work right away. There is nothing so calculated to produce mental unsettledness than by switching oneself from comparative leisure to hard, unceasing toil. So when I set up camp my first business—or, rather, that of my manager—is to make the best selection of sparring partners—men who will suppose that it is they who are about to prepare for a fight—and introduce them to a home from home. In this way a happy family is made, and then we all roam or run about the countryside. We get up running races, we devise all manner of games that have nothing to do with fighting; simply do we seek to re-create boyhood's days, and when we have got that which we seek—the feeling of gladness which

springs from health and a contented mind—actual training for fighting begins.

In my gymnasium you will find a heavy sack suspended from the ceiling. If you saw it and supposed that I set about punching it you would be wrong. The sack is set swinging and made to describe all sorts of fantastic capers, so as to serve to quicken my footwork. At Manitot it was "the Bombardier"; at La Guerche, and later at Stanmore, it was "Beckett."

There are some days when I fear that I am working too hard, so I go to Descamps and my sparring partners and say, "To-day we go shooting," or according to the season, "We will give fighting a rest. It's fishing to-day."

The whole aim of a boxer, as that of any man who is seeking to make himself fit for some test of physical endurance, should be to obtain as much distraction as possible. A fighter especially must, above all things, make sure that the mind is entertained, and it can never be entertained if it is not distracted and so kept severely apart from monotony.

Imperfect training means that a man has forced himself into training; that because of its very sameness he has sickened of it. Come with me one afternoon, when I am getting ready for a fight, and see me and my sparring partners helping Descamps

out with a new song. A pugilist, having left his novitiate days behind, does not—at least, I do not—when he gives himself over to training, strive after improving his boxing. His business is to build up his physique so that it will reach the highest standard of physical excellence. Training is certainly hard work, but it was never intended to mean long, colourless, nauseating days. Destroy your naturalness by leading an unnatural life and you destroy your humanity, and this destroyed you have destroyed your fighting qualities.

Nothing amused me so much during my stay at Stanmore than when one well-meaning, bountiful gentleman arrived at my hotel groaning under the weight of half a side of bacon, a small sack of potatoes, half a dozen fowls, and a hare.

"And why these presents?" I asked.

"It's no good your thinking of meeting Beckett unless you feed up," he answered. "The more you eat the better."

"But if I gobbled all these I should die," I protested.

And the kind, benevolent gentleman looked very distressed.

The impression is abroad that a prize-fighter must of necessity be fed as if he were one of your excellent English turkeys; and do you know, the fact that

M. AND MME. GEORGES CARPENTIER IN THEIR PARIS FLAT

because I did not ask for, neither did I revel in, Gargantuan feasts at Stanmore, it came to be said that I was in a decline.

I just eat and drink what I like, as much as I like, and no more. And that is the way I get fit and keep fit.

What is my favourite punch? That with which I won my fight with Beckett—any punch that I can drive home and so achieve success. I cannot say that I have any particular punch that may be called a speciality.

When I enter into a fight I do so with an open mind. I set my brain working so that in the shortest possible time I might discover the weak and strong points of the man I am up against. Then, having taken what I consider to be a complete estimate of him, I decide upon the course of action which I think will take me to victory. That is, I force myself to believe that if I can punch this way or that I can end the fight.

I found out what to do against Beckett in the first two seconds; that was when I discovered there was a clear, uninterrupted way along which to send my left hand. If an opponent cannot keep out of the way of your left hand, it is certain he cannot close the door to the right, and when you have found out this, go out to win at once; let there be no waiting, no dally-

ing; spare neither your man nor yourself. Do the obvious thing. Strive with all your might to knock him out.

It is the greatest possible mistake, in my opinion, for any boxer to decide what he will do before he gets into the ring. He must fashion his ways according to how his opponent seeks to shape the fight. From the day I dared to take my chances against all heavy-weights, I have been conscious that there would be times when I would be called upon to shoulder very considerable handicaps, for I am not a big man as heavy-weights go—by the side of Fulton, Willard, Moran, Wells and Beckett I am little—and if I am to attain the ambition of my life it will not be because of sheer strength or gigantic frame, but by holding hard to those principles that have won for me a qualification to meet Dempsey.

I had scarcely reached my dressing-room and taken my gloves off, when Descamps, by now very much the first clown of a pantomime, jumped upon a chair and to a crowd of people, who managed to squeeze themselves into the room, said in his best clowning manner, "Gentlemen, pardon! I introduce to you Georges Carpentier—next year the champion of the world. To-night's show is over. Throw your pennies into the hat and please go home."

And when we were alone Descamps would for

ever be saying, "Dempsey, Georges, eh? Georges Carpentier, champion of champions; Professor Descamps, manager of managers! Oh, yes, Dempsey, Dempsey, Dempsey, Jack Dempsey!"

On the morning after the fight with Beckett, Descamps, who had never thought of bed, was abroad early, doing much business; and when he appeared at the breakfast-table he already had a note-book full of engagements for me.

"We go everywhere," he whispered; "France, north, south, east and west; many places in Belgium; to Italy—then to America."

Since I beat Beckett no man could have had a more delightful experience. I have travelled farther afield than ever before, and I have met with only great good fortune and kindness.

"Blink" McClosky came out of retirement and fought me at Bordeaux. The old man was no more after the beginning of the second round, and until I get into the ring against Dempsey I shall have no really serious opponent. But before I try for the greatest and most momentous prize in my life I shall have visited Los Angeles for the purpose of making a film, and I shall have travelled over a large part of Europe.

At the moment of writing, no definite date or place has been fixed for a battle with Dempsey.

After I had won against Beckett, Descamps on my behalf completed a compact that I had tentatively entered into with Mr. C. B. Cochran, and signed a contract by which I consented to meet the world's champion under that gentleman's auspices. This I made known before I returned to France after my triumph at the Holborn Stadium, but within a few hours after it, offers from promoters simply showered upon me. Descamps has got a whole room full of them. I must confess that some of them have come from men who have neither the money nor the business acumen to stage a fight for the world's championship.

You have been regaled with all manner of statements as to when and where the fight will take place, but we (that is, Descamps and myself) have yet to get to grips with Dempsey and his manager, Jack Kearns.

I am, of course, hoping that Mr. Cochran will be able to put the fight on in London. That he has been generous enough in the matter of purse everybody will agree, but if he fails to secure Dempsey's signature and the champion will not defend his title in Europe, then I will fight him in America. We are bound to meet. I, as the challenger, would not dare to stipulate where the fight must be. It is up to Jack Dempsey. Should he ask for the battle-ground to be

pitched in the States, I go to America. Wherever the fight takes place, it will be a mighty one. I look to it not as I would a personal matter. I await it as a Frenchman who would always fight for his country. I will fight for France, and if I go down, I will go down with my jaws set tight; with all my fighting blood boiling and surging; and in the full consciousness that I met a better man.

My study of Dempsey began the day after my fight with Beckett. It will not be finished until one of us has won.

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